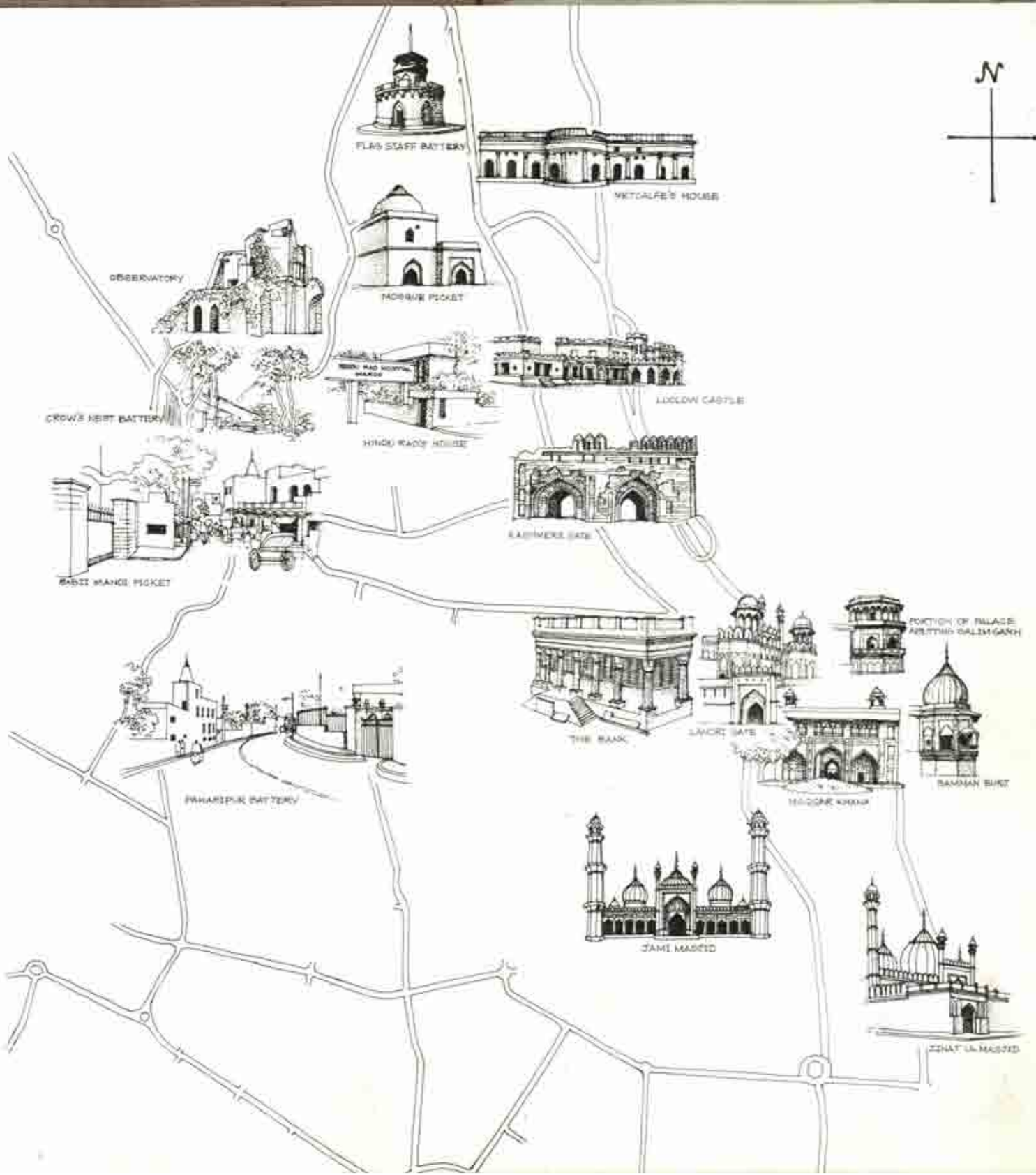
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1

Beato's Eye: Imaging Delhi in the 1850s

Jim Masselos

Felice A. Beato features in most histories of nineteenth-century photography as one of its pioneers, not for technical innovation but for his adventurous subject matter. His penchant was for military campaigns. He was at Crimea in 1856 (and perhaps earlier) and moved on to India in January 1858 to record the last embers of the 'Indian Mutiny' of 1857. Two years later, in February 1860, he proceeded to China where he recorded more British military adventures and then settled for a number of years in Japan, probably in 1864.[1] He seems to have stopped active photography around 1877 and died in Burma around 1908 where he had settled and set up a studio and a wood carving export operation in 1889.[2]

In regard to India, China and the Crimea he is most often remembered as a military photographer, an adventurer, a photographer of military expeditions, though in Japan the range and scope of his subject matter and his role as one of its pioneer photographers earn him other accolades.[3] His Indian photographs win him mention in accounts of the development of photography because he was one of the earliest of that early band of photographers who went out, travelling away from Europe to record contemporary events and what were, for European audiences, exotic or strange scenes. Of course, even in apparently out-of-the way places gentlemen amateurs, European and local, were usually already hard at work taking photographs, to say nothing of the professionals who quite rapidly in the 1850s already had studios in operation.[4]

Beato's Indian photographs have another textual life outside photographic histories, but it is usually an existence shorn of his authorship and the surrounds of exotic adventuring. Some or other of his images feature in almost every illustrated history or other visual account of the events of 1857. He is there as an eye-witness and reporter, an interpretation which I shall discuss later. Particularly popular in such

[1] Unless otherwise stated, all biographical information about Beato in this article derives from John Clark, John Fraser and Colin Osman, '5. A chronology of Felix (Felice) Beato (1825?–1908?)', xerox document, 1989. I am indebted to Professor Clark for providing a copy.

[2] John Lowry, 'Victorian Burma by Post. Felice Beato's Mail-Order Business', in *Country Life*, 13 March 1975, pp. 659–66.

[3] A selection of Beato's vivid China photographs appears in Clark Worswick and Jonathan Spence, *Imperial China. Photographs 1850–1912*. Pennwick/Crown, USA, 1978, pp. 32–43. For Beato's Japan photographs see Clark Worswick, *Japan. Photographs 1854–1905*, Pennwick/Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1979, pp. 12–14, 16–17, 19–20, 26–9, 32–3, 35–9, 48, 54–6, 77, 82–91 and Helene Bayou, *Felice Beato et l'Ecole de Yokohama*. Photo Poche, Le Centre National de la Photographie, Paris, 1994.

[4] Cf. the acerbic note in the *Bombay Standard*, 8 November 1858: '. . . there is a party of Continental photographers now on their way out, with the object of making a professional tour through India. They will probably find us further advanced in these matters than they expect.'

narratives are images he constructed in Lucknow: one of 'mutineers' swinging from the gibbets; another of skeletons strewn in front of a battered, cannon-ball pock-marked Secundera Bagh, and a third of the former King of Oudh's fish-shaped boat lying stranded on the sand bank of a river.[5] But other images from Delhi and Lucknow are also requisitioned to illustrate the British re-conquest of India or even of Indian resistance. When his photographs are used to illustrate a printed text they are rarely acknowledged as having been taken by Beato; if acknowledgement is made, it is more often to the current owner of the copyright — the lending agency or repository — rather than the creator of the images. It is the archive which imbues the object with authenticity and provenance.

Location establishes another kind of ownership when the photographs accompany the written word. In such instances the verbal context, the content of the printed word, defines the way the image is to be read so that different sets of glosses come into operation which may well be far removed from those operating in Beato's time. The author through his words appropriates the photograph and locates them within his own framework. This then makes a point in regard to the photographed image that is a commonplace in regard to written text — that the text takes on an existence of its own once it is completed, it is no longer the author's but is available for interpretation and reading according to the audience. By extension, the receiver rather than the creator re-creates a text and refashions it. Beato's photographs thus occupy a doubly ambiguous situation: they are appropriated by the author of the printed text and subsumed within it for the writer's purposes rather than the photographer's; and they are received and interpreted within the writer's framework by those who read the writing. The photograph becomes part of the writer's story and is modified and affected by the new context. Its identity is subsumed and amalgamated.

The photograph may thus inhabit many different kinds of spaces and many contexts and is recreated and used variously. Every viewing is different because every viewing has a different context or a different use. This is paralleled in the way the image is itself produced. The photographer has a like relationship with the physical object or location which is the subject of the photographic enterprise. The photographer produces a likeness, a two-dimensional simulacrum of part of a three-dimensional subject that exists in a space that has no bounds or confines. What is created is something new, a simulacrum of an outside reality, a fashioning of the real that is as much the product of an act of creative interpretation or creative fiction as is any written text or narrative. It is with the simulacrum that I am concerned in this essay and with the multiple conceptual spaces which it inhabits through its physical existence as photograph, a two-dimensional object, not a three-dimensional space.

First I want to interrogate Beato's reputation as a military photographer, or rather the photographs on which the reputation is based. I do so through an examination of two albums of his photographs held in a private collection in Sydney and now reproduced here.[6] The volumes contain fifty-six photographs, a number of which are in the form of a panorama consisting of two or more plates joined together. Some of them are large and spectacular in size; one, a panorama of Shahjahanabad ('Old Delhi') is over six feet long. All are of Delhi, the Civil Lines or their environs, in so far as the Qutb Minar and Mehrauli might be so considered.

From the information presently available it is not clear as to precisely when Beato took the photographs. He arrived in Calcutta on 20 January 1858 from Suez; the following month he lectured to members of the Photographic Society of Calcutta and within a month he had moved up-country. There, from the beginning of the hot months, he visited cities recently reconquered by the British after the uprising of 1857. In March and April he is reported to have visited Kanpur and Lucknow and in October he was again at Kanpur. In the following year from February through to April he revisited the region — Meerut, Agra, Simla and Lahore. Sometime during this two-year period he was in Delhi and photographed the buildings and scenes which feature in this book.

Whatever the dates, whichever the year, what emerges is that the British had well and truly subdued Delhi by the time Beato

[5] For good reproduction of some of Beato's Lucknow images, see Clark Worswick and Ainslie Embree, *The Last Empire. Photography in British India, 1855–1911*, Gordon Fraser, London, 1976, pp. 63–5.

[6] The current owner obtained the volumes at a National Trust book sale in Sydney in the 1980s. The albums had been donated to be sold at the Trust's sale by a family originally from Britain. The 19th-century-style gilt leather volumes with gold-lettered title, *Delhi*, were bound in England. At the end of each volume is a foldout hand-written sheet, headed 'Views of Delhi' followed by a numbered and titled list of the photographs.

reached the city. Mutinying sepoys had rushed to Delhi from Meerut in May 1857. Not until September did British forces, after having encamped for several months on the Ridge, finally conquer Delhi. When Beato eventually reached Delhi he could not record the military campaign itself since by then it was over. He could, however, capture the battlegrounds and other places of note in that campaign, and record the occupying army in possession. His photographs were not taken at the moment of action, a time when the outcome, the overall destiny of the event, was uncertain. They were not reportage, not pieces of visual journalism taken in the heat of a moment in which the future is uncertain and where multiple possibilities exist as to what might happen. Rather, they were about a present mediated by a knowledge of what had happened in the past. They were endpoints rather than beginnings. His Delhi pictures hence constitute closures of past events whereas reportage presupposes a lack of foreclosure since it is never clear at the time how events will turn out. His photographs are thus already on the way to myth-making; the photographs become a record of memory and icons for memorial.

The point operates at a number of different levels and I want to establish it in different ways. The first of these relate to Beato's financial intentions. He was a professional photographer who earned his living by selling photographs, and operated a commercial studio in Calcutta. His style of operation was to take his photographs on location and then print them in large numbers. At a lecture in London long after the event he said that at one time he had printed in Egypt some 25,000 images from his negatives of the Sudan campaign which, while presumably an exaggeration, indicates his style of operation.[7] The photographs were made for sale and therefore were designed to appeal to an audience, British and patriotic. How precisely their purchasers used them is not documented, but the example of an album in the India Office Records is suggestive: Mrs Younghusband has a large bound album of keepsakes and mementoes of various kinds, including watercolours, newspaper clippings, handwritten text and photos. She includes a small number of Beato photographs in a section on the Mutiny.[8] They serve as her record and her acknowledgement of the success of British arms.

The two Sydney albums fulfil a similar function. The handwritten lists at the back of each of them indicate the memorial connotations attached to the photos.[9] More, they sum up the story of British conquest and place it in a narrative form. The first image in the first volume is the pontoon bridge of boats along which the Meerut mutineers arrived in Delhi. The second image is a large panorama of Shahjahanabad from the top of a minaret in the Jama Masjid, an image that surveys the town that was subsequently to be conquered. The third and subsequent images until the seventeenth are of batteries, pickets, observatories and other buildings on and around the Ridge on which the British had been encamped; the buildings show the destruction resulting from various sorties and forays. One image of a ravine on the Ridge (1.7) has four or more skulls carefully arranged so that they face the camera, behind are other parts of skeletons, presumably intended to highlight the gruesomeness of the campaign, though the positioning of the skulls suggest the photo was carefully composed. The next group of photos are of the places where the city walls were breached and where the heaviest fighting occurred before the British army finally broke in through Kashmiri Gate. There follow photos of buildings within the walled city, again where fighting took place, and then, at the beginning of the second album, attention is directed to the Red Fort and the Palace itself and the building within the palace grounds in which the Emperor was confined. Apparently out of place is a panorama of the city from the Ridge side, rather than from within the city, as was the case with the Jama Masjid panorama, but perhaps this panorama is used to summarize the view of Delhi from the Civil Lines where the main military action occurred. The third image in the second volume introduces pathos with the photograph of the tree under which Christians were murdered shortly after the outbreak of the Mutiny. The following group of photographs adds a touch of local colour in that the Jama Masjid is shown both

7 Colin Osman, 'New Light on the Beato Brothers', in *British Journal of Photography*, 134, 1987, pp. 1217–21. The article contains a full reprint of Beato's talk to the London and Provincial Photographic Society as reported in the Society's 26 February 1886 issue.

8 The Younghusband Collection. 'Recollections of our Indian life, etc.', Vol. 2, dated Christmas 1880, ff. 11–15, IOL&R: Mss Eur F 197/37.

9 When the photographs appear in different collections they usually bear similar titles, suggesting a similarity in perception and use of the images. Cp. for example the description of a Kashmiri Gate image in the Younghusband volume, 'The Cashmere Gate Delhi — the Dome of the English Church seen behind' and its description in the Sydney album as 'Kashmir Gate'.

outside and inside, as are other mosques and a gateway and a street scene. This is the city which the British occupied — picturesque, alien and replete with touches of difference — a point to which I shall return later. A photograph of Humayun's Tomb is deglamorized into Mutiny memorabilia as the place where the Emperor fled after the conquest of Delhi and where he was captured. Then the photographs move beyond the confines of Shahjahanabad to other monuments, the eighteenth-century Jantar Mantar astronomical observatory and the complex of structures at Mehrauli around the Qutb Minar. The collection concludes with a last image back in the Civil Lines of the new burial ground and the recently completed tomb of General Nicholson who had fallen during the campaign. The last image reaffirms the composite message of the volume: it again has a touch of pathos in its record of Nicholson's death for the Empire, it affirms bravery and in recording the new British cemetery it makes a further underlying point about British occupation and conquest of territory.

The photographs and the way they are combined operate at different levels. They recount the story of British conquest, a story that became rapidly familiar to the British public through the press of the day and the various journalists who reported on what was happening, as well as in innumerable books, pamphlets and songs. The details of the Delhi campaign and all its sites would have been familiar by name to patriotic Britons. As a popular piece of piano music of the day, 'The Battle March. Descriptive of the Triumphant Entry into Delhi' demonstrates, the victory in Delhi was equated with all the appropriate British virtues: bravery, patriotism and superiority. The words used to explain the music make the point as well as any other example:

> The Clock at the Palace of the Great Mogul strikes Four. Break of Day. Drums at a distance. Sunrise. Morning Bugle Call. Echo. The Mutineers in possession of Delhi. Drums. INDIAN AIR (at a distance). The Mutineers are alarmed at the approach of the British Cavalry. CAVALRY MARCH. General Wilson's arrival at the Cashmere Gate. Guns of the Mutineers resisting. Halt. Halt, the approach. Trumpet Call for Troops to form in order of Battle. General Wilson orders an immediate attack. Mortar. Cannon. Flight of the Mutineers. Hurrah, Hurrah, Hurrah, they fly. Smile on in Hope Old England.
>
> 'See the Conqu'ring Hero comes
> Sound the Trumpets beat the Drums'.
> Trumpets, Trumpets. THE CAMPBELLS ARE COMING [9]

[9] John Pridhan, *The Battle March. Descriptive of the Triumphant Entry into Delhi. Arranged for the Piano Forte*, E. Pitman Hart, London, n.d. The copy of this sheet music consulted is in the author's collection. Another copy, dated c. 1859, is illustrated in C.A. Bayly (ed.), *An Illustrated History of Modern India 1600–1947*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1991, p. 249.

Among their other connotations, the words combine ideas of place and conquest just as do Beato's photographs. Beato treats his battlescapes in a restrained and constrained manner appropriate for the messages they are to contain. He does not use framing structures to beautify the scene or attempt to dramatize them with stark close-ups, for instance, of silhouetted half-standing walls or doorways. Rather, a concern to represent the terrain of the battlegrounds ensures a simplicity of composition and an element of starkness. The need to record thus ensures an appropriate, respectful treatment in representing the ground. These photographs have few distractions, they are not dressed up with clusters of people, subjugated or otherwise, nor are daily activities depicted to take away attention from the main focus: Beato chooses to delineate nothing more than the battleground itself. There are two exceptions, however, in this grouping of photographs which do contain people. One (I.17) is of a site which slopes down and away from the viewer and has a complex perspective; a sense of the dimensions of the scene is provided by a group of Indians seated in the immediate foreground and at the bottom of the picture, but the people are so unimportant that Beato cuts them off and allows them only half their bodies. The other example (I.24) is driven not by compositional exigencies but by a message: a solitary uniformed soldier is shown standing on a bastion of the city walls beside a flagpole, a signal both of British conquest and the continuance of British control. The images are very different from the battle images he recorded in China a couple of years later: not only are there dead figures strewn on the battlegrounds, there is an image of an encampment with tents, horses and soldiers, and other images peopled with soldiers scattered within a fort.[11] The Chinese battlescapes are full of people, the Delhi ones are empty and devoid of them.

By necessity Beato's battlescapes could not mimic the spiritedness of the popular genre of battle prints with their charging horses, marching soldiers, waving standards, gunshot smoke and flying Union Jacks, even had his equipment permitted it — for the simple

[11] See the images reproduced in Clark Worswick and Jonathan Spence, *Imperial China. Photographs 1850–1912*, Pennwick/Crown, USA, 1978, pp. 33–7.

reason that there were no such scenes when he was in Delhi. Instead, he captures the battles through their aftermath in the space of the battleground. Because he treats that ground with respect, and even staidness, his images become a field on which can be imposed an interlinked set of imperial values: those of patriotism, strength, superiority as demonstrated in the conquered — and therefore hallowed — British ground. The restraint in his treatment permits the images to be imbued with a seriousness appropriate for a site on which all the exemplary British virtues of teamwork and sacrifice for the greater good had been demonstrated.

Because they commemorate as well as record, the handling of these battlescape photographs has a different quality from Beato's other scenes. The ground acquires a different feeling and was no longer everyday space; it has been touched by the liminal and the sacred.[12] Not long after the Rebellion, the Raj turned many of the key sites of its Mutiny into special commemorative places, secular 'sacral' space. The new and British cemetery in which Nicholson was buried was one such. So too were some of the Delhi locations photographed by Beato to become Mutiny memorials later — Kashmiri Gate among them.[13] In Lucknow, the Residency, also photographed by Beato, was in this category too. There the structure was dominated by a Union Jack which was never lowered day or night, being the only such flag in the Empire, at least until August 1947 when it was taken down secretly in the middle of the night and given to King George to add to his collection. The most extreme example of British sacred memory was the Well at Kanpur where a number of Europeans had died — it became a memorial and Indians were totally prohibited from entering it during the entire period of British rule. The Well, in a photograph taken by Samuel Bourne, features in numerous nineteenth-century albums of Indian scenes and was one of the most common late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century postcards. As for Beato's battlescapes, they illustrate the place of military action which for British viewers were associated with a range of ideas and emotions about the nature of British power. The photographs were part of the raw material as well as a contribution to the growing cult of Empire for which India was all too often an unwitting source.

If an evolving celebration of Empire underlies Beato's photographs, the notion assumed other shapes when he moved his camera away from battlegrounds. Military presence is still mediated in his record of the pickets, batteries and the lines in which the army encamped for all those months on the Ridge and its surrounds. Most of the time in these photographs the places are empty of soldiers: the location is enough to convey the story of the former military encampments. There is, however, one striking image of a picket with soldiers, posed in uniform around their cannon and behind them the domes of a masjid — but in the distant midground other soldiers, barely visible, stand posed, but out of uniform as if they are on a picnic (2.10). Though the British may have been the army in occupation, and though their victories figure in Beato's representational intentions, they are only part of the story his images convey. Significantly, there are no portraits of soldiers as individuals in the Sydney albums, unlike his photos taken in Lucknow.[14] What Beato does here is present soldiers as part of a group. Individuality is lost just as the group itself is dwarfed by the scenery which surrounds them, the mosque which towers above and reduces them. Though the British may be in command, their soldiers are nevertheless diminished and it is the surrounds which dominate, not the soldiers. How the photos were read by a Victorian audience is another matter. The lists describing these images in the Sydney albums (which are used in Section 3 of this volume to provide headings for Beato's photos) locate them only in a context of military history as 'Crow's Nest Battery' or 'Another View [of the same battery]', 'Mosque near the "Custom House" Battery' and so on. Given this message, the photographs were presumably read as part of the story of military conquest and imperial history. The presence of soldiers provides a touch of verisimilitude and perhaps another assertion of the idea of imperial conquest and the taming of foreign ground. The military strand is clearly a strong undercurrent

12 I have been influenced here by Christopher Pinney's discussion about the values attached to space in his 'Moral topophilia: the signification of landscape in Indian oleographs', in Eric Hirsch and Michael O'Hanlon (eds), *The Anthropology of Landscape. Perspectives on Place and Space*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1995, pp. 78–9.

13 The sites were part of tourists' sightseeing schedules well into the following century. See, for example, their listing in Murray's *A Handbook for Travellers in India, Burma and Ceylon* . . . , John Murray, London, 15th ed. 1938, pp. 280, 297–300.

14 Contrast this lack with Beato's portrait of soldiers in Lucknow. See his 'The Sikh Horse Regiment, Lucknow, During the Indian Mutiny, March 1858' which has portraits of Lt H.C. Meecham and Assistant Surgeon Anderson photographed with a group of Sikh cavalrymen, all of whom are distinguished as portraits. The photo appears in Worswick and Embree, *The Last Empire*, p. 15.

in these images. However, the way the compositions are framed suggests there were other sets of ideas and contexts at work. They relate not immediately to displays of power but to aesthetic debates and transitions in artistic forms.

Here I need to diverge in order to establish a context for the rest of the discussion. The photographer in the 1850s was the recipient — even victim — of at least two sets of notions about the kind of composition he should be creating and the kind of images the new medium should produce. Its range and extent were still unclear and numerous statements were made as to what photography could and should do. The title of a 1970s Victoria and Albert Museum exhibition summarizes one mid-nineteenth-century attitude: *From today painting is dead*.[15] In other words, the realism of photography would replace painting and would do all that painting could do and do it better. Photography was superior in its ability to represent detail; it had a sharpness and clarity that painting could only dream of. Photographs were assessed in the 1850s in terms of their naturalism, their ability to recreate sharp, precise images: if the clarity was not there then the image was considered to have failed. Thus the *Bombay Times* chose to note that Narayen Dajee's photographs had been 'greatly admired for the softness of their tone, their clearness of colour, and sharpness of detail'.[16] They were also to capture the quality of light present in India — the bright, 'blazing sunlight'[17] which had an intensity so different from the subdued light of England. A photographer should capture that feeling as well. Photographs were judged on their ability to capture likeness and were praised therefore. All of this reinforces the idea of photography as being about realism: its products were judged in terms of creating likeness and achieving sharpness and precision.

But there was another agenda used in the 1850s to assess a photograph — its convergence with art through what were held to be proper subject matter and composition. The argument was that a photograph, like a painting, should have a distinctive subject and treatment. A photograph should be special because of and through its subject matter, it was of no use to have subject matter that was repetitive, undistinguished or undifferentiated. Thus, one commentator noted that a photograph of a railway line was no different from any other railway line, and had nothing to distinguish it in any way.[18] Subject matter had to be special, a specialness determined not by genre, portrait, landscape, architecture or whatever, but by a subject in that genre which was different, unrecorded and unfamiliar. Composition was likewise to be appropriately attractive, but what was attractive was not necessarily clearly spelt out in early comments. As one photographer noted, his print of the Kanheri Caves near Bombay was likely to be 'more interesting to antiquarians than lovers of picturesque scenery'.[19] Ideas of mystery and suggestiveness were favoured:[20] so too were framing devices and angles, as long as they did not interfere with the overall clarity that was held to be axiomatic of the medium.

Behind the talk of composition lay more than half a century of discussion about the notion of the picturesque.[21] What constituted picturesqueness had been most clearly articulated in William Gilpin's writings in the late eighteenth century;[22] his books were reprinted and

[15] The Arts Council of Great Britain, *'From today painting is dead': The Beginnings of Photography*, Victoria and Albert Museum, 16 March–14 May 1972, London.

[16] *Bombay Times*, 28 April 1857.

[17] The phrase is used in a review of *The Photographic Album*, Nos 30, 31 in *Bombay Times*, 24 January 1860. For a discussion of the quality of Indian light see *Bombay Standard*, 1 January 1858.

[18] A reviewer of the June 1857 number of the *Indian Amateur's Photographic Album* after complaining that the Elephanta Caves were 'worn threadbare' as a subject then castigated 'A Scene on the Bombay and Baroda line of Railway' as having 'no interest whatever to the eye or mind, delineating simply a strip of country on a dead level, covered with a confused heap of native *materiel* employed in the construction of the line, and might equally represent any other mile of railway that is being constructed over the dreary and uninteresting plains of the Deccan.' *Bombay Times*, 31 August 1857.

[19] *The Indian Amateur's Photographic Album*, Nos 28 and 29 cited in *Bombay Standard*, 19 November 1859.

[20] Cf. a review of *The Photographic Album* of May 1857 which assesses a photograph: the Elephanta Cave temple 'which gives but the entrance to the stupendous cavern, but its black and gloomy retirement from the sunshine of day, and its shadowy pillars seen in the distance, afford evidence of an artistic eye in the painter's selection of the scene', in *Bombay Times*, 29 June 1857.

[21] The following discussion on picturesqueness has been influenced by G.H.R. Tillotson, 'The Indian Picturesque: Images of India in British Landscape Painting, 1780–1880', in Bayly (ed.), *An Illustrated History of Modern India*, pp. 141–51; Peter Galassi, *Before Photography: Painting and the Invention of Photography*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1981; Nicholas B. Dirks, 'Guiltless spoliations: picturesque beauty, colonial knowledge, and Colin Mackenzie's Survey of India', in Catherine B. Asher and Thomas R. Metcalf (eds), *Perceptions of South Asia's Visual Past*, Oxford and IBH, New Delhi, 1994, pp. 211–34.

[22] William Gilpin, *Three Essays: on Picturesque Beauty; on Picturesque Travel; and on Sketching Landscape: to which is added a poem, on Landscape Painting*, R. Blamire, London, 2nd ed., 1794. Facsimile reprint, Gregg International, Farnborough, 1972.

their ideas used well into the next century. Essentially, what Gilpin did was to legitimize the landscape as a major genre, to rehabilitate its subject matter as the concern of high art painting and prints and to give it a standing it had not had before. If the landscape was a proper subject for painting, it was nevertheless not to be realized through the means provided by the neo-classical perspective of Renaissance art but by the use of newer ideas of perspective that had been developing over the previous couple of centuries. Different ways of handling space were to be utilized which, amongst other matters, involved the foreshortening of space, the movement of primary subject from the central pyramidal point, the introduction of cliffs or hills, romantic looking trees and the like as dominant motifs, and the use of human figures to provide a sense of size. The landscape became romanticized, an obverse of the industrialization that was changing the city scape. Landscapes became a major genre in the painting of the early nineteenth century and figured even more prominently in the newly invented lithograph and aquatint processes. While picturesqueness imposed a vision on the landscape, it also required a degree of accuracy in the depiction of topography. The use of the camera obscura, a mechanical device whereby an image of the outside world was thrown on to a surface which was then traced by the artist, further promoted the move to visual accuracy. The Daniells, when they toured India to put together a set of drawings and paintings later to be made into large aquatints, used a camera obscura to ensure topographical and architectural exactitude. But their compositions were still influenced by ideas of picturesqueness, an especially appropriate mindset with which to handle the very different sights they encountered in India.

Picturesqueness as it developed in British landscape art thus had a number of co-existing elements. In moving away from Renaissance perspective, it promoted the visually aberrant or different, and even while promoting a romanticized landscape it nevertheless required some likeness of the original subject. Moreover, though it expressed the preferences of what the British wanted to see in India, it did so through a pre-determined aesthetic preference. As Tillotson notes,

> What is clear is that the idea of the Picturesque, having arisen from the discussions about European landscape in the mid-eighteenth century, cannot itself be identified as part of the imperialist project. Furthermore, it was so fundamental a part of the English landscape tradition that to most artists it was not a consciously adopted instrument but an inescapable artistic vision.[23]

Photographers in India in the 1850s were caught in the middle between ideas of picturesqueness and ideas of naturalism. Both were required, though at times the pursuit of one might apparently mean the denial of the other. Beato, I suggest, very much expressed the ambiguity involved in the juxtaposition of realism as record, and picturesqueness as pleasing composition. And it is the two elements put together that help explain the characteristic features of his photos of the military pickets. The pickets are placed within a picturesque landscape, observing the conventions and idioms of those landscapes. Their pictures are depictions of landscapes and observe the traditions of picturesque landscape, the dominance of nature and the use of natural features to set the content. But they are also records of British military presence and in this sense they conform to the military agenda of the imperial project. The recording function of photography takes the picturesque aesthetic and turns it into the purposes of Empire. But nevertheless the images remain within a picturesque aesthetic and they are not constructed so as to present an orientalized India, a place of exotic difference and otherness — the difference comes from romanticism, not from orientalism.

Can a similar interpretation be applied to those photographs that have no apparent function of immediate military illustration? What of the photographs of Indian buildings and Indian palaces? Some of those of the Palace and the Red Fort in which the defeated Emperor had lived bear a clear military message; one is of a building in which he was confined after his defeat (2.1); another (2.3) is of 'the tree under which the Christians were [supposedly] massacred'[24] — and both carry a message about the campaign and its aftermath. The Lahori Gateway of the Palace (1.26) and the views of the Palace from its riverside walls (1.27 and 28) are less explicit, but the images show a palace which is run down and decrepit, not one which is a proud example of Mughal architecture. Framing devices, such as the river reflecting the walls (1.28) and the buildings on top of it (1.27), fit into a picturesque aesthetic, but generally the Palace environs are downplayed and the image of the place presented is appropriate for the site of a defeated

[23] G.H.R. Tillotson, 'The Indian Picturesque' in Bayly (ed.), *Art Illustrated History of Modern India*, p. 151.

[24] Handwritten title at end of the second album.

enemy. The album contains no photographs of some of the more beautiful interiors of the Palace — and whether Beato took any is unclear.

His treatment of the Jama Masjid (2.6) is more straightforward. The interior facing directly at the great dome, the two minarets and the mihrab is a clever two-photo panorama which overcomes the difficulties of architectural photography and manages to keep both the minarets perpendicular. The perspective is strictly Renaissance neo-classical;[25] a straightforward depiction which provides a sense of the strength of the structure. Similarly, the side view of the steps and the minarets is treated with equal restraint. There is little attempt to exoticize the structure with the addition of local colourful touches, in the way that the Daniells had treated the same subject from approximately the same angle.[26] The other photographs of buildings within the city are more clearly picturesque, especially the mosque framed by an archway — it captures an unusual view and is the only image in the collection that might be labelled exotic (2.9). By contrast, the image of a Jain temple is handled with stark restraint in which human figures are not introduced at all. The Jantar Mantar, the great observatory, is shown in all its neo-realist strangeness but the figure introduced is of a European male clambering up the steps in a way that is not in the least dominating (2.13). As for the photographs taken at Mehrauli (2.15–27), the Qutb Minar and various tombs and structures, the recording here is detail as sharp and precise as possible. The scene is exotic in so far as the shapes are different from structures in Europe, but the composition avoids attempts at obvious framing picturesqueness, presumably the details of the ruins are sufficient in themselves. Again, how the images were read at the time is unclear: the album lists give only their names and they have no relationship to 'Mutiny' events and no military associations. In that they represent structures which are pre-Mughal and therefore had no connection with the enemies of Britain, they may well have been read in their own aesthetic right — even if it was an alien aesthetic.[27] Such images served much the same purpose as postcards were later to do, as records of interesting scenes or detail of intricate carving, but how far it is feasible to analyse them further in terms of orientalism or exoticism or even in terms of the imperial project is less clear.

Perhaps an answer to some of these issues can be gleaned by looking at the way Beato has handled people in the non-military photographs and, more generally, how people were treated as subject matter in Raj photographs. There is a great deal of cogency in the ways in which the photographs of imperialism from slightly later in the century has been analysed in terms of their illustrating an orientalist discourse and mediating ideas of social control and social power. The argument put simply is that the photography of India deliberately represented and helped in the construction of Asiatic difference, an Asian other of exoticism, of weird and wonderful customs and religions, of an anarchic or else hierarchically ordered society. It was contrasted with the order and rationality of European and British society. Photography, science and literature not only created images of difference and put forward the idea of a chasm in understanding between the two continents but also justified foreign and British rule. Photographs, then, illustrated and highlighted difference, but also served an additional function. They fitted into the ways in which the Raj exerted its power through the control of knowledge, through classification and separation. Thus, later photographs of various castes and tribes, of different occupations, of various religions and categories of people represent the nexus between knowledge/power and personified social control. While some of the early 1850s photographs, taken for example by members of the various photographic societies in India, were concerned with the depiction of people belonging to various social types, from the 1860s photographic classification came into its own in the form of the government-sponsored multi-volumed *The People of India*, which was produced between 1868 and 1875 replete

[25] Cf. the panel attributed to 'Circle' of Piero della Francesca, 'An ideal landscape', c. 1470, reproduced in Galassi, *Before Photography*, p. 12.

[26] See their 'The Jummah Musjid, Delhi' (I. *Oriental Scenery*, 23) reproduced in Mildred Archer, *Early Views of India. The Picturesque Journeys of Thomas and William Daniell 1786–1794. The Complete Aquatints*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1980, p. 75.

[27] Cf. the comments of William Howard Russell on seeing these structures, comments which combine an orientalist fascination with admiration for their imaginative achievement. He described the 'most extraordinary remains of Hindoo and Mussulman architecture, in the form of grotesque temples, such as not even the Society of British Architects could dream the like of after their annual dinner. The photograph alone could do justice to the wonderful richness, the extravagant grotesqueness, the wildness of ornament, the exquisite finish of those ruins, the origin and object of which have puzzled our best antiquaries. I admired and wondered, which is as much as the best of us can do.' *My Diary in India, in the year 1858–9*, Routledge, Warne, and Routledge, London, Vol. II, p. 76.

with some 468 photographs.[28] Indians were denied individuality in the way they were placed into categories and reduced to essentialist stereotypes.

As to how far Beato's work can be fitted into such a range of explanation is another matter. Indians appear in many photographs and provide local colour as well as filling picturesque compositional needs as measuring sticks against which the size of what was being photographed could be perceived. Their presence could presumably cater to a desire to see exotic Indians portrayed and in this sense they could well be interpreted as exemplars of at least a picturesque if not orientalist intent. On the other hand, as with the soldiers, there are hardly any portraits of Indians or attempts to illustrate categories or types of Indians. There are exceptions: one is the group of palanquin carriers in the Ludlow Castle picture (1.15) and the other is the not very clear figure of someone who seems to be a sadhu in a photograph taken in the Qutb Minar complex (2.20). But these photographs provide local colour rather than depicting categories. The photographs are not about the discourse of knowledge/power and do not illustrate it. What is interesting about the Indians who do feature in Beato's Delhi photographs is that the same people reappear in most of them. There are four or five who appear time and time again, as far as it is possible to tell by blowing up the detail of the image. There is one tall man who is particularly distinctive with a turban that comes down to the middle of his back (see, for example, 1.6, 10 and 14). In the street scenes a few additional people are also included, but the nuclear group is also present. If my reading of the photos is correct, then Beato was probably using the Indians he employed to help him with his equipment as he went about photographing Delhi. Curiously, there are two Europeans who reappear in the photos: one is the man wearing a sola hat who is clambering up the steps of one of the Jantar Mantar structures and who also appears in front of another observatory on the Ridge (2.13 and 1.5); the other man wears a soft felt hat and has a luxuriant dark beard (2.17 and 25). I suspect he might be Beato and that he got someone to take the image which he had set up. As for the older man, he is remarkably similar to a self-portrait of another British photographer, Captain Gill.[29] The two Europeans do not appear in the military photos and do not convey any especial sense of Raj power. The stilted poses of both Indians and Europeans are repeated in various photographs, something indicative of the photographic technology available to Beato which required subjects to remain perfectly still for a time in order to be sure of a sharp image.

Judging by the appearance of the non-military individuals in the photographs, the Europeans do not represent the conquering foreigner, though their comfortable presence in the various locations suggests easy familiarity and a right to be there. As for the Indians, their placing does not convey any notion either of a subordinated population or of individuals categorized as types. Given the overall focus of the albums on places associated with military conquest, there seems to have been little need to depict a subjugated populace and even less to categorize them. British rule had just been asserted by military conquest, and in Delhi at the time the government was not at all concerned about social control through constructing knowledge to ensure continued domination. It had other means of control. The Mutiny experience as refracted through Beato's photographs taught that the British conquered through the sword and not through the pen or the mind.

Beato's photographs are not about people but about locations. In fact what is surprising in the photographs is the lack of people rather than their presence. This may have been due to the then technical limits of the medium, although Beato in his 1886 lecture said that he had reduced exposure time down to only a few seconds. It may have derived from Beato's specific choice in composition, and the photographs do show a strong compositional hand.

There is another set of explanations which relate to the nature of Beato's subject: conquest and the conquered city. The general argument, as recently articulated by Satish Sharma, is that

> The 'views' which were created were about an 'all encompassing and appropriating western gaze about landscapes in which the local populace was

[28] See catalogue entry 346 in C.A. Bayly (ed.), *An Illustrated History of Modern India 1600–1947*, p. 280.

[29] See 'Captain Gill seated in front of the Chintamani Mahadeva Temple, Kothali, Buldana District, Berar, 1871', a photograph in the British Library's Oriental and India Office Collections and reproduced in Museum of Sydney, *Encountering India. Colonial Photography 1850–1911*, Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales, Sydney, 1997, pp. 36 and 54. John Falconer has suggested in a discussion (May 1997) that Robert Christopher Tyler probably accompanied Beato while he was taking his Delhi photographs, in which case it is not improbable he may appear in some of Beato's Delhi photographs, and could well be, though this is conjecture, one of the Europeans in 1.26.

invisible. The empty and timeless land they defined, was full of decrepit but picturesque ruins, all there for the taking. Once taken, it became the site of an enterprise premised on the observing, recording and ordering power of the West.[30]

Applying this approach to Beato, the argument would be that Indians were invisible because the image of their absence was a justification for the appropriation of their space. Yet, as I have argued, Delhi had already been appropriated and conquered, justification for its appropriation was not needed. On the contrary, its places had already been absorbed into a mentality which converted these 1857 sites into British Mutiny memorials, absorbing them into imperial possessions. They had become icons of the British Empire and part of it. A further and specific historical point supports the interpretation. People were absent from Beato's pictures because, in all likelihood and against all one's sense of the way Indian spaces are filled with people, they were not there. Most of Delhi's population after the conquest had been removed from the city itself. They were located outside. According to Russell's diaries, between Mehrauli and Shahjahanabad the row of

> miserable sheds, in which the outcast population of the city, forbidden to return to their homes, are now forced to live, looked squalid and vile. For miles they stretch along the road-side. More squalid and vile nought can be, save the wretched creatures who haunt them — once, perhaps, rich bunneahs, merchants, and shop-keepers.[31]

The city had been ruined and it was largely 'deserted',[32] apart from the presence of British soldiers and a few Indians. Chandni Chowk, Russell observed, was full of people near the shops where sweetmeats and provisions were being sold.[33] And it is in his pictures of street scenes that Beato shows some Indians. Ghalib painted an equally bleak picture of 'this half-desolate, half-peopled city' at the beginning of 1858,[34] and he continued through 1858 to describe the situation in particular of Muslims who were not allowed to return to their homes and of the way in which entry was allowed only by permit, and that, too, only for one day.[35]

The photographs then tend to exclude the Indian subject not to provide a reason for appropriation but to record the effects of a conquest that had already occurred. They are illustrations of the military aspects of imperialism, and are about action, conquest and power, rather than of social control over people.

When I came to photograph the same sites as Beato had covered some 137 years earlier the situation had changed enormously. It was difficult to replicate the images precisely. Partly this was because of the changed technology of photography. Equipment and its capabilities had altered considerably. Instead of the sole lens, the bulky camera and the large plates which Beato had used, present-day equipment is much more manoeuvrable; the single-lens reflex camera, various lenses, the 35mm film with its fast speed — all give a different look to the final image. While it might have been possible by using more specialized equipment to reproduce the look of the Beato photographs more closely, I decided this was not appropriate. End-of-twentieth-century photographs have their own specific look and it seemed quixotic to fight a grain and texture which is of this time and place. Instead, I decided to work with the viewpoints created by current equipment and within their associated parameters rather than to try and achieve a literal, structured re-visioning of mid-nineteenth-century perceptions.

Moreover, the places which Beato had photographed had altered. The meanings and connotations which attached to his images could not by any stretch of a camera's vision be properly reproduced at the present time. Locations had changed and the nature of the city itself had altered. Present-day Delhi is far from being a conquered city, and has not been so for many generations. It is the thriving centre of a great nation and the Beato photographs which had located Delhi within the British imperium and its encompassing and exploratory patterns of thinking and seeing, had become irrelevant. Beato's sites no longer therefore have the meaning they once had, nor do they have the same relevance. Some places have been preserved as part of the city's and the nation's historical heritage, reminders of a many-textured past. Others, like the Observatory on the Ridge, have survived, not

[30] Satish Sharma, 'Hidden Histories: The Colonial Encounter' in National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi, and British Council Division, British High Commission, *A Shifting Focus: Photography in India 1850–1900*, New Delhi, 1995, not paginated.

[31] 9 June 1858, Russell, op. cit., II, 77.

[32] Russell's first description of Delhi on 5 June, ibid., p. 53.

[33] Ibid., p. 67.

[34] *Ghalib 1797–1869: Life and Letters*, Vol. I, translated and edited by Ralph Russell and Khurshidul Islam, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1969, p. 157. I am grateful to Francis Robinson for suggesting this reference.

[35] Ibid., p. 158, 161–2, 190.

because of their British associations but because of a history which long antedates any British presence. Other places have disappeared to be replaced by roads and expressways, or to be absorbed into an urban sprawl of shanties and buildings so that they are traceable only with difficulty and after long and painstaking searching. Others have been subsumed within parks and recreation spaces, or even appropriated by sadhus and devotees. But there are those like the Jama Masjid which have retained their usage and fulfil the same purposes now as they did in 1858 and earlier. As for areas like the Mehrauli complex, they continue to have, as they did for Beato, a tourist function. Unlike the situation in Beato's day, they are now heavily promoted more for tourism and commercial profit than for national purposes and attract not only the foreign outsider but Delhi locals as well as other Indians on sightseeing expeditions. Such changes are inevitably reflected in the present-day versions of Beato's sites. They have different signification because the very significations themselves have altered. While Beato could take his photographs and through them give a very real sense of what most of Delhi was like in his time, the photographs I have taken at the same locations cannot by any means be seen as constituting the Delhi of the present. It spreads beyond and away from Delhi as it was in 1858. Even where Beato's Delhi and contemporary Delhi overlap, they are different places, other cities with their own ethos and divergent programmes.

What has also changed is the environment. Delhi's air was once clear and sharp and Beato's photographs have a clarity and precision that the present-day photograph cannot achieve. This is not because of differences in the technologies of the camera but differences in the light and the air. The Delhi haze imposes its own softening upon the photograph to an extent that only becomes apparent when one is trying to capture an image. Again, Delhi now is a greener city than it was when Beato was taking his photographs after the battles and the encampments which destroyed not only buildings but vegetation. Trees and greenery currently reduce lines of vision and some vistas that were commonplace for Beato do not exist because they are hidden by trees, or by new buildings and structures. And, of course, some of Beato's subjects cannot be reproduced at all because they no longer exist. The vista from the minar of the Jama Masjid, of dwellings stretching to the Red Fort, is emptier because the British razed a whole locality. Gone, too, are other structures which sometime in the past century or so disappeared for reasons that probably had less to do with imperial priorities and more with the needs of commerce and urban development. The photographs here record the changes directly and implicitly; they provide a sense of the change in environment as much as they record the different mentalities, the mind sets, between one period and another, and over the span of time. Beato's Delhi is not the Delhi of the present-day but it is a part of that Delhi and helps in understanding what Delhi has become. We hope that the contrasts will prove as interesting and even as instructive as it was for us as we worked on the collection and its parallel images.[39]

[39] Some funding for the project was provided by a small Sydney University History Department Research Grant. We are grateful for the help given by Ms Meg Miller in tracking down some of the references in Sydney and to Mr Ratish Nanda for his guidance through many of the byways of Delhi to locate the places which Beato photographed. Some of the research and all the photography was undertaken while I was a research visitor at the Indian Council for Historical Research.

2

Ways of Seeing

Narayani Gupta

It is a truism that different people see different Delhis, that even a particular segment of landscape conveys different things to different people — crowds to one, animation to another, garish lights to some, cheerful colours to others, the essence of urban living to one, chaos to another. . . . The person who has known Delhi as a child, the teenaged student from Bihar, the official 'posted' to the city, the businessman seeking opportunities, each knows and relates to different parts of the metropolis. Tourists, regimented and told what to look for by standard 'guide-books', share the biggest common denominator of what they view.

In the following pages, Jim Masselos retraces the steps of Felix Beato, wandering over what is now called 'North Delhi', then through Shah Jahan's city, and on to 'South Delhi' where he must have found dozens of tourists focusing their cameras on the same views as he. . . . Left to himself, Jim might have explored the city differently, focused his camera on other views.

Before going back in time to 1857–8, to understand why from the *embarras de richesses* of 'views' in Delhi, Beato chose the ones he did, it would be useful to see how generations before and after him have seen the city, from visual and verbal descriptions. These have been linked to the political fortunes of the city, which was a capital from 1648 except for the half century after 1857. A glowing miniature painting, a poem of grief, a mysterious 'oriental' city, a triumphant symbol of British valour, a dreamscape fixed on celluloid, refuge and place of opportunity, an urban disaster. . . .

In the Islamic urban tradition, the city as paradise was a common image. Delhi's rulers from the twelfth century are remembered by their buildings, massive and beautiful. In the climate of Delhi, with its fierce summer heat, water and verdure were even more essential than shelter. Long before the British botanists began playing games with plants and seeds, carrying them back and forth across their colonies via the Kew nurseries, the rulers of Delhi cut down the indigenous *kikar* with its feathery leaves and gorse-like blossoms, to plant orchards of fruit-bearing trees. They combated the dry landscape by harnessing the Yamuna upstream and carving out a network of canals to feed the orchards, linked to the numerous rainwater reservoirs and stepwells. Amir Khusro, the celebrated Hindi poet of the fourteenth century, said paradise was right here, in Delhi. Babur did not live long enough to build a city, but his son Humayun dreamed of founding at Delhi 'a large city, the ramparts of which from their loftiness might open the tongue of scorn at Khawaranak and Sawir . . . and the palaces of Bahram. . . . That in this city a magnificent palace of seven storeys be erected, surrounded by delightful gardens and orchards.'

His great-grandson Shah Jahan had calligraphers inscribe on the interior walls of his Dewan-e-Khas (Hall of Private Audience) the inscription of paradise being here in the Palace — the Palace watered by the canal which the Emperor named the *Nahar-e-behisht* (Canal of Paradise).

Not many Europeans visited Delhi in the seventeenth century.

Dr Francois Bernier, who lived in the capital in the 1660s, wrote a detailed account of life in the city, with fascinating details of the havelis, of the quality of bread (he was a Frenchman, after all!) and the merits of different types of fish. He was writing at a time when a European ruler who called himself the Roi Soleil (Sun King), as self-regarding a title as Shah Jahan (Emperor of the World), was building a *qila* at Versailles, also replete with fountains and formal gardens. Bernier anticipated possible criticism when he wrote that though the Jama Masjid 'was not constructed according to those rules of architecture which we seem to think ought to be implicitly followed, even in Paris a church erected after the model of this temple would be admired' (Bernier, p. 279).

Shah Jahan was not allowed to enjoy ruling from Delhi very long. But the city he had commissioned became the permanent capital of the Mughals thereafter despite Aurangzeb's prolonged absence in the Deccan. Unlike earlier rulers, the later Emperors did not choose to build new capitals. The power of the Mughals declined, and the city and palace were set upon by the armies of other rulers jealous of its wealth. Nadir Shah's triumphant capture of Shah Jahan's *takht-i-taus* (which translated as the 'peacock throne') did not mark an Iranian takeover of the Mughal Empire, but it was a blow to its morale.

The city at this time nevertheless retained its *esprit* and its poets, who mourned the political decline, but insisted that the city was still beautiful.

> The seven climes are in its every lane
> Does Delhi have its equal anywhere?

asked Mir Taqi Mir (Russell and Islam, p. 259). Forced to go to Lucknow and Bharatpur to find patrons, he was homesick for Delhi's *galis*. The Court and its patronage was a bonus, but the city, with its open squares and its culs-de-sac, its winding lanes and its water channels, acquired an anthropomorphic character for its inhabitants, a feeling which was expressed by the poets in verses that are still sung today, verses that mean so much to a people who are more verbal than visual in their picturing of the city.

Verbal descriptions could exert a fascination on people who had not even seen Delhi. Dryden wrote his melodramatic *Aurengzebe* in 1676, in that Emperor's life-time. This was the first of the orientalist constructs of an Arabian Nights-like Shahjahanabad, with a mysteriously dark and decadent court, with censorious suggestions which perhaps could equally have applied to the contemporary court of Charles II. The ravages of the eighteenth century, and the rapidly-changing political equation between the Mughals and the British justified pejorative accounts not only of Mughal government but even of the Palace and the city. Sacred Calcutta, with the classical facade of the new Government House and the Gothic majesty of the new Cathedral, was implicitly contrasted with profane Delhi, with its vandalized Palace and its Jama Masjid.

In the nineteenth century, Delhi, with all of north India, became the trendy alternative to the Italian Grand Tour. British conquest had made the city and its environs safe even for women visitors. Some of the most evocative descriptions of Delhi before 1857 are by women — Mrs A. Deare, Emily Eden, Fanny Parks — who paid formal visits to the Royal Family (Fanny Parks spoke of the 'friendly princesses', who subsisted on very small allowances), were invited by Begum Samru to grand banquets, were tempted into extravagance by jewellers and shawl-merchants, and spent leisurely mornings picnicking at the Qutb Minar and visiting other monuments. The exotic was more exciting than the familiar, and the cantonments on the Ridge did not provoke much interest.

Emily Eden's brother, Governor-General Auckland, urged that the buildings at Mehrauli, specially the Qutb, be repaired and this was done by the military engineers who had sole charge of public works till the PWD (Public Works Department) was set up in 1854. These monuments were familiar to families back in Britain, thanks to the paintings which were the contemporary equivalent of picture postcards. The Indian artists at Delhi, trained miniaturists who painted 'views' for a British market, were an important component in the 'Company School'. Many albums of their pictures must have been compiled, and one that survived and has been printed as a book less than twenty years ago, was that of Thomas Metcalfe, Commissioner at Delhi. His 'Delhie Book' was a gift for his daughters. The paintings, which he annotated, were of the monuments of Delhi, including many of the Palace. They are enclosed and enfolded within the British Peace — the album begins with a miniature of St James' Church and ends with views of his own palace, Metcalfe House. His part-proprietary pleasure in the beauty of historic Delhi and the living city was communicated to others, as seen in his

daughter Emily's happy descriptions of days spent in picnics and festivities.

The Delhiwalas enjoyed trips to Mehrauli and Humayun's Tomb, as much as British visitors did. Language and lifestyle differentiated the Delhi poets from British dilettantes and officials. But there was for a brief time a forum for them to meet — the Delhi Archaeological Society, the members of which discussed the different historic buildings in and near the city. A major by-product was *Asar us Sanadid* ('The Remains of the Past') by the young Sayyid Ahmad Khan — an account of buildings, places and people in Delhi. In a second edition, he rewrote the book substantially, following the suggestions of the Austrian scholar Sprenger and the British official Roberts, marshalling the buildings into chronological order. A later official, Carr Stephen, prepared a guidebook in English, in which he acknowledged his great debt to Sayyid Ahmad. The Asiatic Society was interested in the work of the Delhi Archaeological Society, and the projected Archaeological Survey of India would have incorporated the Delhi association. Before this could happen, the landscape of Delhi was fractured by the events of 1857.

The story of the events in Delhi from May to September 1857, from the day the rebellious soldiers from Meerut entered Delhi, till the day the British soldiers and their allies recaptured the city, has been recounted in diaries since published, in memoirs, in scholarly accounts, in novels . . . By contrast, the British reprisals, from September 1857 through 1858 have not received much attention. Those days came vividly alive for Hubert Evans, one of the last British Deputy Commissioners of Delhi, in the 1940s, in the course of conversation with members of the former royal family:

> I cannot forget a particular family, ci-devant well connected, but long since retired within itself, which used to invite me to its modest home in Deputy Ganj, that suburb for whose layout considerably before the upheaval of 1857 a Deputy Commissioner — thus an official (Charles Trevelyan) in whose footsteps I was walking with the delay of one century — had earned lasting credit. Grandmother Zubeida Begum, usually visible on these occasions, was, they told me, ninety-three and had lived in the Palace as a girl, and — I am able to testify to this — preferred the quaint Persian idiom of the phantom Court to the Urdu speech of everday life. A willing listener at the tea-table of these surviving links with Mughal India, I could not help reflecting how absurdly 'out of it' the historian is in his college rooms or at a favourite desk in the India Office Library. And on the other hand how disgracefully casual the clod-hopping Collector I was could show himself in the society to which he, as nobody else in the whole wide world, had the entrée. After a few minutes, out came a loose folder of old photographs, yellow and curling at the edges. Most were portraits of great uncles, paternal or maternal, direct descendants one and all, I would be assured, of Tamerlane himself. But several, taken out-of-doors, documented the horror of the bombardment of a sector of the city towards the Jama Masjid. These puzzled me the first time I saw them. Fops and dilettanti, faineants save in the harem and the chase, how could anyone in that set have even known what a camera was in 1857? Or knowing, been adroit enough to use so cumbersome an apparatus in the confusion of the calamity, exposing the plate when still wet — for that was the collodion process — and developing it straightaway after exposure? Long-lashed Mu'azzam, thirteen and just coming in from school, chimed in with an explanation. 'The Eurasian we had in our service took those' he volunteered. 'Some Wilkins', he added, naming him. It was just plausible, I imagine. Not a Sahib. Not, that is, accepted by those who lived in style in Civil Lines beyond Kashmir Gate and might be watched almost any evening, escorting mem-log in taffetas and crinolines as they drove in barouches and buggies to their parties and balls. No, a subordinate with a sing-song intonation who carried a tripod on his shoulder in lieu of a rifle during the emergency. Some Wilkins. This, or some other resourceful man like him, had been present in the streets of Delhi with his camera when the lamp of the Mughals flickered and went out. One of his 'stills' had stuck in my memory. The Mosque is there, ill-focused to be sure, in the background, while in the foreground there are blurs leaning inward from the left, and grotesquely elongated shapes suggesting, but no more than suggesting, human beings, are streaking away from them towards the right bottom corner. 'Look', the boy prattled on, fingering these blurs and these shapes as doubtless his parents and the parents of his parents had done down the years, 'look on the toppling walls of our houses, look at us fleeing for our lives'. 'And what', his father would ask me despondently at these sessions, 'are we to do with those lives now that we have escaped with them?' What indeed, except to draw pitiful pensions on the last Saturday of the month from my Treasury or to hope that little Mu'azzam would be selected when a bit older for a junior clerkship in my gift? (Evans, pp. 163–4).

Ghalib, the poet of Delhi, had lived in the city through the terrible months of 1857. He spoke for many when he said in 1858 that he could not recognize his city. The Qila had been vandalized, its inhabitants had fled in panic into the city. Later, the town walls and the mohulla gates had been broken, and all the people forced to live outside the city for many months. Large areas were levelled for the railway line and new roads. Before 1857, the alignment of the railway line through Delhi had been planned so as to locate the station east of the river, at Ghaziabad (just as the station for Calcutta was across the Hooghly, at Howrah) and to curve the line beyond the northern

Ridge. In the obsession with security after 1857, all this was changed, and the railway station was built in the centre of the city, easily accessible to the Palace (now called the Fort) where the senior army officials were to be based. Together with the buildings of the Delhi Institute — home for the Municipality — and the later Clock Tower, this created a new British landscape in the middle of Shah Jahan's city. New landscapes, like wine, take time to mature. At first incongruous, it came to be accepted by a later generation that had not experienced 1857. As against this quondam Mughal city, a *counter* landscape was swiftly created — that of the sites of the victories of 1857, commemorated in blow-by-blow accounts, in letters, in sketches, in photographs and accounts of pilgrimages — to the Ridge, to Kashmiri Gate, to the buildings in the city — like the Bank — associated with May 1857. It is significant that the British gallows in Chandni Chowk, where so many were indiscriminately hanged, went unremarked, though a brief foray by Nadir Shah into Chandni Chowk was repeatedly (till today) described in a manner which suggested that he sat for hours watching people being slaughtered, from a balcony in Sunehri Masjid. Thus, the time an earlier tourist would have allocated to a ceremonial visit to the Mughal royal family or to Begum Samru was now taken up with a slow-paced tour of north Delhi, ending at the Mutiny Memorial (built a few years after Beato took his photographs).

This three-section landscape — the Ridge and the Civil Lines, of interest to the British, the city and its western suburbs, where trade and social transactions occurred, and the south (as far as Mehrauli) which was a vast archaeological park — was modified from 1914, when it was decided that the ceremonial new capital city would be located in the south and not, as earlier assumed, in the north around the site of the 1911 Durbar.

Lutyens' New Delhi is significant in that it was not called Georgetown, but was seen as the eighth incarnation of a site repeatedly chosen as a capital. The catchy phrase 'The Seven Cities of Delhi' had been coined some decades earlier (Sayyid Ahmad Khan had written about seven forts and fifty-four gateways). In the neo-classical city designed by Lutyens, neither Indian nor British in its layout, the architect was careful to ensure that the Viceroy's Palace was higher than Shah Jahan's Jama Masjid (and the new Anglican Cathedral).

A 'New Delhi' assumes an 'Old' — and over time Shahjahanabad became 'Purani Dilli' (Old Delhi). To call a city 'old' is to forget that it was a capital, and to see it as dilapidated. The town-planning and Improvement Trust ideology decreed that the crowded areas of Shahjahanabad be 'decongested' by opening up the west, beyond the Ridge, for settlement. Few people cared to cross the Ridge, deserted as it was, with the fear of encountering an occasional leopard. The result was that Shahjahanabad became more crowded. The winter capital of New Delhi, with its open spaces, wide roads, and trees not fully grown, was dauntingly barren.

Since 1947 Delhi has been transformed at unbelievable speed, so much so that the earlier landscapes are difficult to read. This frenetic expansion was because of two circumstances: one, as the capital of united India, Delhi needs many office premises and houses for the officials. These were built in Lutyens' New Delhi and in South Delhi, initially as far as the 'Ring Road', then till the 'Outer Ring Road' and later beyond the Qutb. The second unforeseen situation was that refugees from the provinces that became West Pakistan streamed into north Indian towns and for best part into Delhi. Pockets of government-owned land in the south and a vast swathe west of the Ridge, and to the north-west, became within years a densely-built new landscape. The Ridge itself has been built on, but fortunately three sections of it are still recognizable as undulating hill — one in the south (in Mehrauli), another in the centre (near the former Paharipur) and the third in the north (near Delhi University). The University is spread over much of the area of the pre-1857 cantonment.

The edges of Shah Jahan's Delhi and of Lutyens' New Delhi became blurred, and the arbitrary new toponymy, with west Delhi being called 'New Delhi' and the later settlement east of the river called 'Delhi' made for further incomprehension. In the fourteenth century, Feroze-shah Tughlaq's Delhi had extended from Mehrauli to Daryaganj, and was described as being full of bazaars, madrasas and gardens, with a vast concourse of people on the roads. Once again, Delhi is a vast open city, known in terms of neighbourhoods and colonies rather than of imperial capitals. It is very obviously a locus of power, and the cavalcades of swiftly-moving cars imperiously clearing a way through the traffic are a reminder of this. The city has its poets and writers, for the State, like the Sultans and Badshahs of earlier days, dispenses patronage. Its numerous universities and research institutes are the modern incarnation of the Tughlaq madrasas. Trade and

banking continue to gravitate to Delhi. Above all, it remains the 'Jahan-Panah' (The Refuge of the World) that it was called in the fourteenth century. All Indian and many Asian languages are heard in the *galis* of modern Delhi, and a hybrid English-Hindustani is evolving as a language of communication, just as Urdu/Hindawi did some centuries ago. But these *déjà vu* reflections are not obvious to everyone. Delhi used to be compared to Rome. Today, it is likened to Los Angeles.

That it is a city layered with history is taken as common knowledge, and the presentation of its historic sections or buildings evokes interest — but not widespread passionate concern. For that we will have to await another generation.

3

Beato's Delhi

Narayani Gupta (text) and Jim Masselos (photographs)

H C Fanshawe, Commissioner of the Delhi Division in the 1890s, wrote a guide-book because he found the available ones 'sadly incomplete and sadly incorrect'. For those who could spend only three days at Delhi, he recommended the following itinerary:

A week or at least five days, may well be devoted to Delhi, many of the sights of which deserve repeated visits. For those who can spend only three days to the place, the following plan of sight-seeing will perhaps be found the most convenient.

First Day

Morning: Drive through Kashmere Gate to the Fort and Palace, the Jama Masjid, and the Chandni Chowk.

Afternoon: Drive to the further end of the Ridge, and from there along it to the south end. Then proceed along the route of the sites of the siege batteries and the breaches, finishing with the spot where General Nicholson was shot and the grave where he is buried.

Second Day

Morning: Drive to the Qutb by the direct route of the Ajmere Gate and Safdarjung's tomb. Spend the day there — one cannot see well all that is worth seeing in less than some four hours — and return in the evening by the same road, pausing if there is time to see the group of tombs at Khairpur. (By starting at 7.30 a.m. and having a second relay of horses, it is possible to include Tughlaqabad in the day's trip; this, however involves a drive of 35 miles and five to six hours sight-seeing).

Third Day

Morning: Visit to the Purana Qila, Humayun's tomb, and Nizamuddin; if possible also the tomb of Isa Khan and of Khan-i-Khanan.

Afternoon: Visit the Delhi Palace again, the Kala Masjid, and the tomb and college of Ghaziyuddin at the Ajmere Gate.

(Fanshawe, pp. 14–15)

By the time Fanshawe wrote his *Guide*, British visitors were aware of three Delhis — the pre-Shah Jahan ruins to the south, Shahjahanabad and the Red Fort, and the Mutiny sites on the Ridge and the area north and west of Shahjahanabad. Chapter III of Fanshawe's *Guide* (pp. 75–221) describes the Delhi of 1857 in minute detail. This degree of interest in the 'Mutiny sites' is reflected in the photographs in this album, which were put together much earlier, and which were copies of photographs taken in 1858 — twenty views are of 'Mutiny sites', seven of Shahjahanabad, three of the Fort, and five of monuments in south Delhi. Some are photographed more than once, and a few in great detail (there are twelve of the Qutb complex). Seen in the order in which they are arranged, the viewer can relive the days from 11 May 1857 when the Indian rebel soldiers from Meerut crossed over the Bridge of Boats to Delhi, till 14 September, when the British forces led a successful assault on Kashmiri Gate, the subsequent days when the soldiers viewed Delhi at leisure, and later ventured south to see the monuments. The last photograph recalls 1857, by paying homage to Brigadier-General Nicholson whose funeral had taken place on 24 September, ten days after he had led the assault on Kashmiri Gate.

N.B. The 'group of tombs at Khairpur' that Fanshawe refers to are those enclosed in the Lodi Garden.

1.1 Bridge of boats over the Jamna from Salimgarh

Pontoon bridges* are an old device — one was laid across the Hellespont in 480 BC — and are still in use; from 1874, Calcutta was linked to the rest of India by a pontoon bridge until Howrah Bridge was built in 1943. The Bridge of Boats at Delhi was the only connection between the two banks of the Yamuna till the rail/road bridge was built in 1867. It saw very heavy traffic, of people and pack animals.

At 8 a.m. on Sunday, 11 May 1857 Delhi's Commissioner Simon Fraser and Collector Hutchinson, hearing about the arrival of the rebellious soldiers from Meerut, went to the 'Calcutta Gate'** of Salimgarh which opened on to the Bridge. Finding this Gate and the access to the Palace closed against them, the soldiers entered the city from the Raj Ghat Gate (east of Daryaganj) and rode up to the Lahori Gate of the Palace. Two months later, in July, Colonel Baird Smith was to try destroying the Bridge of Boats, the lifeline of the rebels, but he could not succeed.

The Bridge became a lifeline to the people of the city, after the British recaptured it.

> On the night of 19th September, when sitting in [St James'] Church compound watching the shells exploding over the Palace and Selimgarh, we heard distinctly . . . a distant, confused hum of voices, like the murmur of a great multitude. The sound came from the direction of the river, and was caused by multitudes of human beings, who, escaping by the bridge of boats to the opposite side, were deserting the city, which was so soon to fall into our hands." (Charles Griffiths, p. 184.)

Today, despite the construction of two railway bridges and three road bridges, the three fairweather bridges (there are pontoon bridges further south, near the Purana Qila and at Okhla) are a boon to cyclists and pedestrians. Before the monsoon, the chain of boats is moved alongside the river bank; it is again drawn back with the help of a tractor from the east bank once the rains are over.

The river-bed near Salimgarh is covered with shanties, an indication of the pressure on land in Delhi.



* 'Punts' describe the flat-bottomed boats, and 'pont' the bridge they formed when laid close together.

** This gate, built in 1852, was destroyed in 1867 when the railway line was constructed (*Delhi Gazetteer*, 1883–4, p. 196).



1.2 *Panorama: from the 'Juma Masjid'*

Robert Barker's view of Edinburgh, painted in 1789, was the first 'panorama', showing that city as it would appear to a person . . . turning quite round'. Later, the same effect was produced by special 'panoramic cameras'. Beato took this view from the *northern* minaret of the Jama Masjid (visitors are allowed to ascend the *southern* minaret —the highest point in the city then, by virtue of the Masjid being built on an elevation, the Bhojla Paluri. 'We went up the minaret and saw the whole city and country like a map below our feet' (Lang, 97, writing on 20 September 1857).

This panorama is without question the most important of these photographs, since it has captured on film views of many buildings which were to be destroyed between 1858 and 1860 as part of the military reorganization of Delhi, when all buildings within 500 yards of the Fort were demolished. One victim was the beautiful Akbarabadi Mosque which can be seen in the photograph (earlier sketched in Sayyid Ahmad's book. Also see the map in Ehlers and Krafft). Its site was made into a park, the central feature of which was to be an equestrian statue of Edward VII, later to be replaced by one of Subhas Chandra Bose. The link between the Fort and the Masjid so clearly seen here was snapped when the south-north Faiz Bazaar avenue was extended to Chandni Chowk and thence to Kashmiri Gate. This area, the centre of Shah Jahan's city, can still be restored to its original beauty, but this will entail sacrifices of parking sites, accepting building controls, and insisting on a high level of civic services, none of which seems to be regarded as necessary or feasible by official agencies at present.

Beato's 'panorama' consisted of eight photographs, which were pasted together. In the present volume they are printed as separate frames and the entire scene extends from page 20 to page 24.







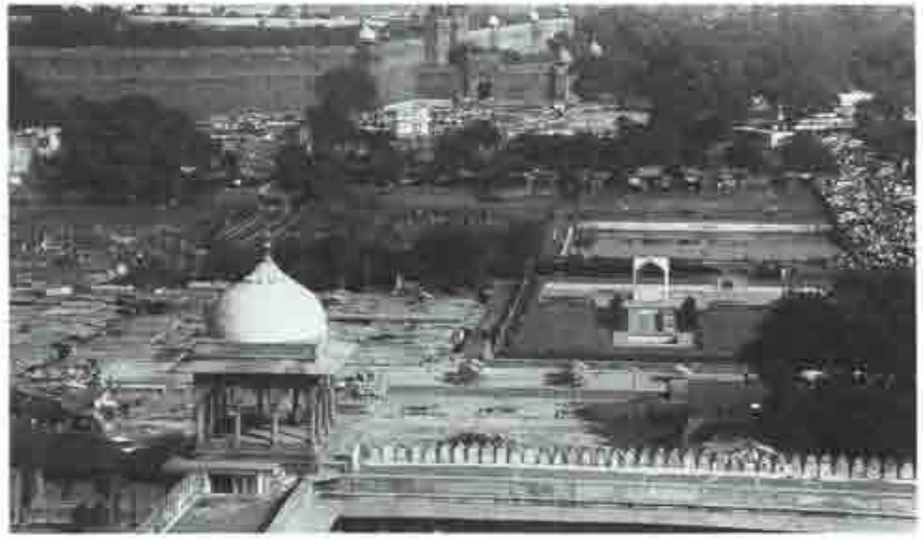


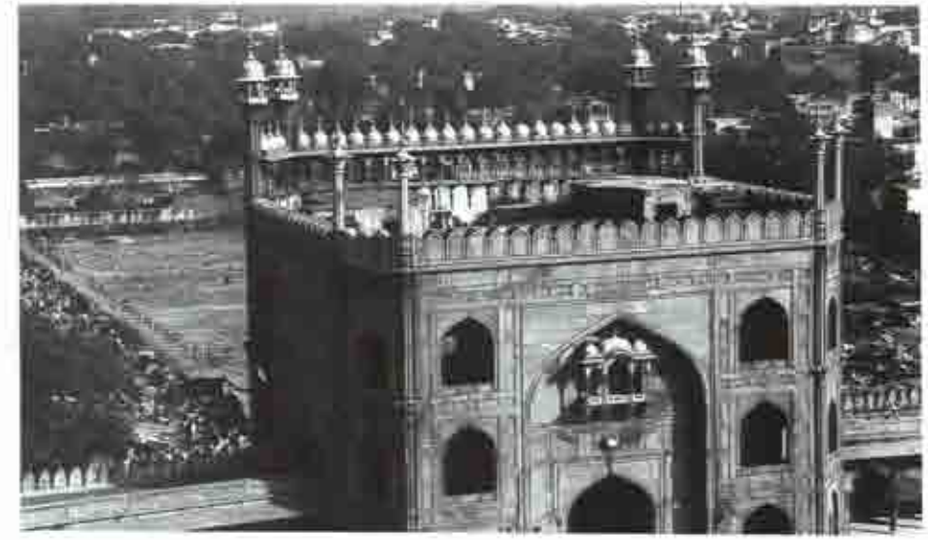
























1.3 Flag Staff Battery ⟶

One reason why the British forces could not recover Delhi for four months was that their men and equipment were scattered, the gunpowder magazine being within the city walls, and the main cantonment north of the Ridge. On the afternoon of 11 May 1857, the British soldiers in charge of the Magazine blew it up, killing themselves in the process. At the same time all the non-combatant British, and their families, made their way to the Flagstaff Tower*. That night the cantonment was set on fire by the Gujars of the neighbouring villages. The Tower, the highest observation post, afforded cramped accommodation for all those who did not get away to Karnal. Lang, coming to Delhi from the Punjab plains, wrote in July 1857 about the British camp:

> It looks exceptionally pretty, the lines of white tents, beyond the green swampy meadows, stretching along the foot of the 'Ridge' which is a long line of hill ground covered with grass, low trees, boulders, on which stand conspicuously the various points — the Flagstaff Tower, the Mosque, Hindu Rao's House — all of which are now posts of our army (p. 56).

Pretty as it was, the four months that the Delhi Field Force spent there told on their nerves, and subjected them to the ravages of sunstroke, cholera and dysentery.

The Flagstaff Tower was spruced up after 1912, when the Temporary Residence for the Viceroy was established in the former cantonment. The road from the Tower led directly to the grand gateway to the Viceroy's House (presently the Delh University Vice-Chancellor's office).

The northern Ridge, afforested and landscaped in the course of the last hundred years, is a green buffer south of the University campus, with pleasant walks and a large population of monkeys.

* Nigel Hankin suggests that the Tower was built not by the army, but by Thomas Metcalfe, who also built three 'follies' in Mehrauli. The door of the Tower faced not the cantonment but Metcalfe's house.





1.4 Mosque Picket

The building referred to in guide-books as a 'mosque' has also been described as part of a palace. It dates back to the fourteenth century when the Ridge formed part of the extensive woodlands called Jahan-numa, a favourite shikar site of Sultan Ferozeshah Tughlaq. Still called Chauburji (for its four domes), the building was damaged by shells during the siege of 1857 and, even after later 'restoration', only one dome has survived.

After the British victory on 8 June 1857 at the battle of Badli-ki-Serai further north, General Barnard posted pickets at the Flagstaff Tower, the Chauburji mosque, the Observatory and Hindu Rao's House, commanding the northern wall of the city. His forces then settled down to await the siege-train from the Punjab. The rebels fired at the pickets from their vantage points on the city wall and bastions.

This northern Ridge — there are other sections referred to as the southern and central Ridge — shows signs of becoming the green expanse it was during the days of the Tughlaqs. Since 1995, these three areas have been designated a 'Reserved Forest', a commendable if belated fire-fighting measure.





1.5 Observatory, Hindu Rao's House in the distance

This Tughlaq building was thought to have been an observatory. It was used as a trignometrical point by the British surveyors (another point was east of the Yamuna, in present-day NOIDA). It is locally known as 'Pir Ghaib' (The Vanished Saint), after a *pir* who mysteriously vanished while engaged in meditation. This may be connected to the fact that there is a long tunnel — or a number of tunnels — which originates here. The ruin is now enclaved in the premises of the Hindu Rao Hospital. Near it is a major water reservoir, constructed in the 1880s. The ugly structure in the background is a water-tank.





1.6 Hindu Rao's House

Hindu Rao was a brother of Baiza Bai, the wife of the adopted son of Mahadaji Sindhia of Gwalior who had been the power behind the Mughal throne of Delhi in the 1770s and 1780s. Baiza Bai and Hindu Rao fled from Gwalior in 1833 when *her* adopted son seized power after a rebellion directed against her. Hindu Rao moved to Delhi and bought the house on the Ridge built by William Fraser, the Commissioner of Delhi (who was murdered in 1835). Hindu Rao, who died in 1855, was very close to the British officials at Delhi. Emily Eden, who likened him to 'a plump featherbed', painted his portrait.

Hindu Rao's *bara* (house) was subjected to heavy shelling from the rebels. It was a spacious three- storeyed building which from July 1857 was occupied by the Gurkhas of the Sirmur Battalion. This battalion was later called the Second Gurkha Regiment.

Bara Hindu Rao was used as a convalescent military hospital after 1857, and later became a civilian hospital, which it continues to be today. The name remains, but the old building is quite gone.





1.7 The 'Sammy' House

The Ridge became a sacred site for the British after 1857, but it was — and is — a sacred place for many hermits. 'Sammy' was soldiers' slang for 'swami', a term used in some Indian languages for God. 'Sammy' House was a shrine of Bhaironji, near a small dwelling of Kanphata sadhus (who had their ears pierced with large holes for wooden rings).*

* These sadhus, who worship Siva (Gorakhnath/Bhairon), were recently seen camped further north, occupying an old tomb near Najafgarh.

The 'Sammy' House picket was subject to heavy shelling from the Mori Gate bastion in August 1857 (Lang, p. 63). In September the Siege Battery I, directed against Mori Gate, was to be placed south of 'Sammy' House. This area was later, and still is, occupied by the Police Lines.

There is no trace of the 'Swami' temple now, but other sadhus have built other shrines, and fight sporadic battles with the Delhi Development Authority which has committed itself to keeping the Ridge free of encroachments. The recent photograph shows the Mutiny Memorial built in the 1860s.





1.8 'Crow's Nest' Battery

This Battery, distinguished by a term used in ships or military works to denote a high vantage-point, was located above a pool in a disused quarry on the Ridge, across the road from the site where the Mutiny Memorial Monument was later built.

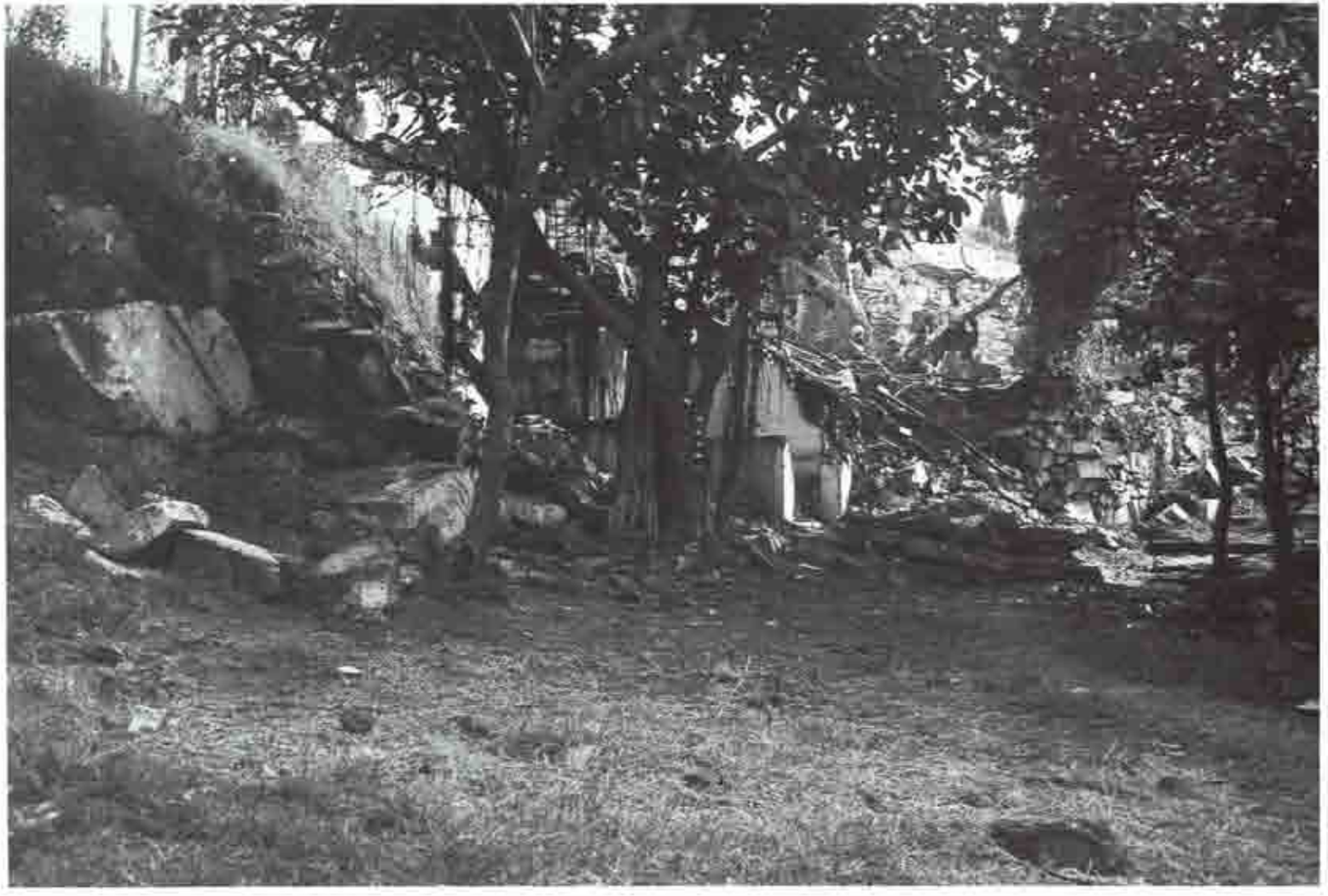
Thanks to the Ridge being 'protected' since 1857 as a 'sacred' site and since 1995 for ecological reasons, this landscape is unchanged except for more vegetation. It is particularly beautiful immediately after the monsoon in September.





1.9 Another view

Some sadhus — not the Kanphata variety, have built a small shrine into the rock.





1.10 'Sabzi Mandi' Picket

The 'Sabzi Mandi' (vegetable wholesale market) was located beyond the city wall, along the Grand Trunk Road to Punjab, and at the foot of the Ridge.

On 23 June 1857, the centenary of the battle of Plassey, a date known to both the rebels and the British, the rebels attacked the Sabzi Mandi picket as a preliminary to capturing Bara Hindu Rao. This sniping continued, but the British engineers gradually demolished walls and buildings around the picket. A month later, on 31 July, this area was safe for the British forces. Lang wrote, 'I rode off through drenching rain to the Sabzi Mandi Serai picket. It is about a mile from the walls. We now hold it, having looted it. At the corner nearest Delhi is a large serai: in this we have a strong European infantry picket' (Lang, 59).

The Sadar Bazaar (the market for the army) of 1858 expanded into a large wholesale market south of Sabzi Mandi after the railway line was built in 1867.* Delhi's first mechanized mill — the Delhi Cloth Mills — was built here in the 1880s. Traffic became so heavy that the Sabzi Mandi was shifted in the 1970s to Azadpur, in north Delhi.

The modern photograph shows the Grand Trunk Road south of St Stephen's Hospital, near Queen Mary's School, all part of the post-1857 Civil Lines. The temple-spire of the earlier picture is seen in the recent one too.

* A small railway station called 'Sabzi Mandi' is still in use.





1.11 'Paharipur' Battery

On 8 August 1857 the rebels shelled the Sabzi Mandi picket from their own new gun-and-mortar battery in Paharipur, reported Lang (Lang, 55).

Paharipur (derived, like Paharganj and Pahari Dhiraj, from 'Pahari' — the Ridge — and, like them, a western suburb) was outside Lahori Gate, near the road to Rohtak, and near the Idgah.

Today, the sense of city and suburb has disappeared. The wall and Lahori Gate were dismantled after 1857, and the urban sprawl is continuous from Khari Baoli in Shahjahanabad, to the Sadar Bazaar which subsumes Paharipur, Deputy Ganj/Trevelyanganj* and Teliwara, and leads on to Karol Bagh and the vast territory of west Delhi beyond the Ridge. Most of this expansion occurred as a result of the immigration of refugees after 1947.

* Named for Charles Trevelyan, who laid it out as a model suburb in 1830.





1.12 The 'Mount' Picket, Metcalfe's house in the distance

The 'Mount' [sic] picket in the Metcalfe Estate was set up on 12 June 1857 in response to the rebels' attack on Flagstaff Tower on 8 June, from their hidden positions in the ravine in the Metcalfe compound.

In mid-May 1857 the 1000-acre estate of the Metcalfe family and its beautiful house was attacked and burned by Gujar villagers who regarded the property as theirs, unjustly appropriated by Thomas Metcalfe.*

* Thomas Metcalfe had died in 1855, and his son Thomas Theophilus, angry at the destruction of his house, helped the British Field Force, acting as a local guide.

The Metcalfe properties later came into the hands of the government, and were divided up into different estates. The ravine where the rebels hid themselves became a road (Mahatma Gandhi Marg) curving round Indraprastha College. It crosses Shamnath Marg and continues to the Flagstaff Tower.





1.13 Metcalfe's House

In the early nineteenth century the Metcalfe family formed a parallel dynasty, with that of the Mughals, and made a distinct impact on Delhi society. It also controlled large territories in Delhi — the Estate, the modified building near the Qutb Minar which housed the grave of Mohammad Quli Khan (sixteenth century), and Shalimar Gardens in the north. The House was a source of great pride for Thomas Metcalfe and has been described both by him and by his daughter Emily (Kaye). One of the few Englishmen who opted to settle down in Delhi, he had a massive library and a collection of Napoleon memorabilia. All this was destroyed in one night by the Gujars. In July, Lang saw a ruined house, swarming with peacocks (Lang, 57).

After Independence, the House was used for an academy to train civil service probationers. Today it forms part of the offices of a government department. It has been repaired and given a coat of paint, but the Roman arches have been replaced by pointed ones.

Government regulations do not permit photography in the Metcalfe House premises, which explains the absence of recent views.

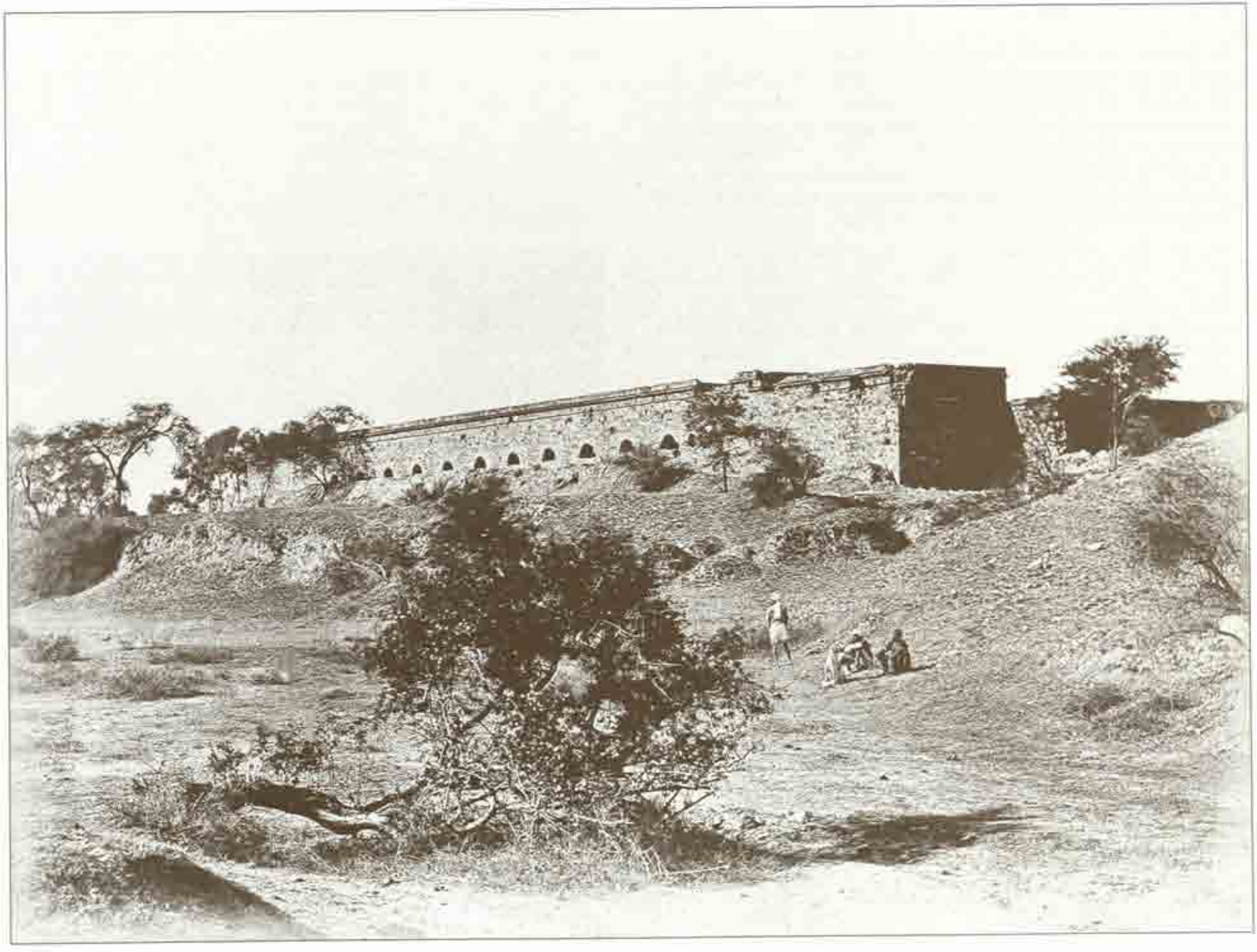


1.14 Metcalfe's Stables Picket

The stables of Metcalfe House were south of the ravine, on a hill. The Metcalfe House picket was broken up into the stable, farm and cow-house pickets. In August the rebels bombarded these from a battery on the east bank of the river. They also held the ground between Kashmiri Gate and the stable picket — 'the stables themselves are nearly untenable' wrote Lang on 18 August, 'bits of the roof smashed in and many a hole right through the walls' (Lang, p. 70). When the Temporary Capital was set up in the Civil Lines from 1912 to 1931, a 'temporary' home and office for the Commander-in-Chief was built on the southern part of the Metcalfe Estate, near the stables. These 'temporary'* buildings were slated for demolition in 1936, but before that, in 1934, the property was sold to Indraprastha College for Girls. As a result, the buildings have become 'permanent'. Subsequent additions at the rear have not spoiled the skyline.

* The word 'temporary' (to mean makeshift, not enduring) passed into local vocabulary. I recall a charwoman talking about a shopkeeper in a dismissive way, saying 'Voh bahut temporary cheez rakhta ha' (He has only temporary things for sale).





1.15 Ludlow Castle

Dr Ludlow, like Metcalfe, built himself a house; it was on a more modest scale, which perhaps explains why he called it a Castle.* After his death it was used as the residence for the Commissioner. Simon Fraser was living there in 1857. After 1857, it became the premises of the 'Delhi Club'. In the 1890s, the estate was given to a school, which in the 1960s demolished the Castle and replaced it with a more practical school building. However, they have retained the name, which is also familiar to bus-users, as the name of a bus-stop.



After three months of desultory sniping, the battle for Delhi suddenly became dramatic. On 4 September 1857, arrived at long last the siege-train from Punjab. Seven miles long, pulled by elephants and bullocks, its twenty-four heavy guns were needed to smash the northern city wall.** Ironically, this twelve-foot thick wall had been built not by the Mughals but by *British* engineers when they saw how fragile the Mughal wall was. This had become obvious after Jaswant Rao Holkar had besieged, from 7 to 15 October 1804, the Delhi which had fallen to the British only the previous year.

The 'Siege' of Delhi in 1857 was in fact *not* a siege but, like the attack on Sebastopol in the Crimean War, an assault on an army in a strongly-entrenched position. It was impossible to surround the city, with its seven miles' circumference. On the eastern front, after the monsoon, the river was washing the foot of the walls. The only possible strategy was to take the city by escalade, by a rapid action which would coordinate destroying the curtain walls and battering Kashmiri Gate. The terrain between the wall and Ludlow Castle was broken by the channels cut by streams flowing from the Ridge to the Yamuna, which afforded convenient cover for the British forces. The batteries on the Ridge were too far to be effective, and new batteries had to be built quickly between Ludlow Castle and the wall.

The rebels did not know it, but they were fated to lose the battle a week before the actual assault on 14 September. They had been 30,000 strong, but they had allowed the British the invaluable gift of time. As a result, there were many desertions. On 13 September, Colonel Keith Young estimated that they did not number more than 12,000. the British forces were also about 12,000 (Stokes, 94).

* Many private houses in modern Delhi are named 'X Palace' (e.g. Agarwal Palace) but some truly opulent ones are named 'X Kutir' (Kutir = hut).

** Why the rebels did not intercept the siege-train will remain one of the unanswered questions of 1857.



1.16 Mosque near the 'Custom House' Battery

The Customs House is shown on pre-1857 maps but seems to have been demolished after the siege. It must have served as a convenient point for collecting taxes on goods being taken into the city from Kashmiri Gate. It was near the Qudsia Palace, built by Qudsia Begum, the mother of Emperor Ahmad Shah, in 1748. Luckily for us, the Daniells painted an exquisite view of this palace, which did not long retain its beauty and was finally demolished during the military operations of 1857. All that survived — and can still be seen — are an elaborately decorated gateway. The small mosque seen in the photograph had been outside the palace. Typically Mughal in style, it is now much the worse for wear since it is adjacent to the National Highway and near the massive Inter-state Bus Terminal that has been built south of it. A large part of Qudsia Garden was sacrificed for this, but what remains is a very beautiful and well-maintained island of green, with old trees. A foundlings' home, Palna, with an unobtrusive, low skyline, has been built in the northern part of the garden.





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1.17, 1.18 Water Bastion and Breach

The defences of Delhi, as built by the British engineers early in the nineteenth century, consisted of a series of bastioned fronts — these were, in anti-clockwise order from the north-east, the Water Bastion (originally named Moira, for the Governor-General who became Lord Hastings), Kashmir Bastion, Mori Bastion, Burn Bastion, Garstin Bastion, Ajmeri 'crown-work', Turkman Bastion and Wellesley Bastion. The Water/Moira Bastion was locally referred to as Badar Rao Bastion.

In September 1857 the rebels pounded the British positions from the Water, Kashmir and Mori Bastions. Once the siege-train arrived, the British plan was to make four simultaneous entries — by bombarding and then scaling the Water Bastion, a similar action at the Kashmir Bastion, battering open Kashmiri Gate, and bombarding the Mori Bastion.

After 1857 this historic three-quarter mile of wall was retained as an icon, an essential part of any visitor's itinerary. Today, it is 'protected' by the Archaeological Survey, but has become hemmed in by roads and very heavy traffic.









1.19 Position of the Custom House Battery

The 'Custom House Battery' (Siege Battery No. III) was aimed at the Water Bastion. The Battery was completed on 11 September 1857, 'behind a small ruined house in the Customs House compound, and under such a fire of musketry as few batteries have ever been exposed to' (Lt H.W. Norman, quoted in Fanshawe, 167). The Battery began firing on the 13th; that night the breach in the Water Bastion was declared satisfactory, and the assault began at 4 a.m. on the 14th.

Until the 1960s, this area was part of the lovely rolling lawns of Qudsia Garden and enclosed the cricket-grounds of St Stephen's College. With the building of the Inter-state Bus Terminal, the biggest in Delhi, it has become very congested.





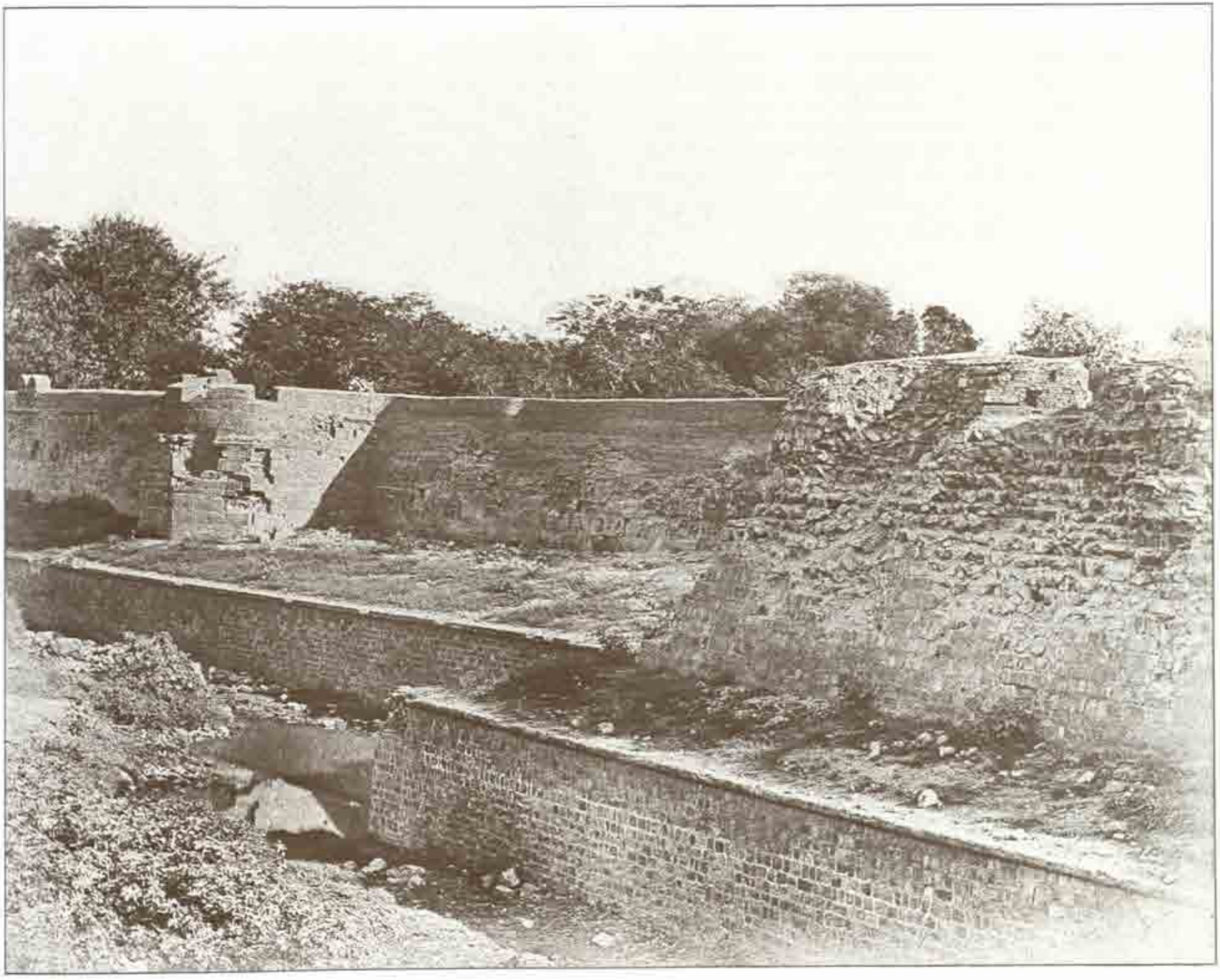
1.20 Grand Breach, 'Kashmir' Bastion

On 11 September 1857 continuous firing from the batteries had made a major breach in the wall near the Kashmir Bastion. Fifty feet of the curtain wall east of Kashmir Bastion had been breached by the 13th, on the evening of which Lang ran up the glacis and later down to the ditch to take necessary measurements. He wrote in his *Journal* of 14 September:

> At 2 a.m. I got orders to go to camp for instructions. There I found in our mess all our fellows preparing, reading their instructions, and poring over the big map of Delhi with various routes marked, buckling on revolvers, and storing haversacks with flasks and bread . . . off I went and got a party of sappers with 18 ladders and joined the 1st column (Nicholson's). I had to lead 250 of the 1st Fusiliers up the face of the Kashmere Bastion. . . . It was most gloriously exciting; the bullets seemed to pass like a hissing sheet of lead over us . . . the edge of the ditch reached, down we slipped. . . . Up went our little ladder, but once on the berm we instantly saw that there was no place for placing our long ladders, so up we scrambled just a steep crumbling wall of masonry. I have seen it since in cold blood, and wondered how we got up at all. (Lang, 90-1)

Today, with the ditch filled in, and the level of the ground raised, the wall does not appear so formidable. [N.B. Kashmir Bastion was called Ali Burj by the local people.]





1.21 Main Breach and Gate

Of the Delhi Field Force, Nicholson's Column was one of four involved in the assault of 14 September 1857, as planned by Baird Smith and Wilson. The Third Column, led by Colonel Campbell, was ordered to advance to Kashmiri Gate, blow it in, and then join Nicholson's Column by the Main Guard. This was a circular fortification just south of the Gate (its alignment can still be traced in the line of the shop fronts and the Ritz Cinema). Lang remarked that, as he was sliding into the ditch, he saw a column of smoke and heard the explosion of the blowing in of Kashmiri Gate. Soon after, Nicholson's Column and the Second Column (from the Water Bastion) dashed into the Main Guard, from where they moved on along the city wall to the west.









1.22, 1.23 Kashmir Gate

Kashmiri Gate, together with the Ridge, was to become a major icon for British tourists after 1857. This double gateway had been built by the military engineer Robert Smith in 1835, as part of the reinforced city wall. It was ironic that the next generation of engineers in the Indian Army had to work out the logistics of blowing it up. 'It is grand what a position we Engineer subs have' wrote Lang, 'we give our opinions more coolly and forcibly than any colonels would dare to do to generals and they all tacitly agree that we are the managing minds' (Lang, 94).

The Third Column, fortified by rum and sermons which recalled the doom of 'the bloody city' of Nineveh (Hibbert, 302), stumbled over the broken wooden draw-bridge after Sergeant Smith lit the fuse to ignite the powder-bags laid there by two engineer subalterns. This was the crucial moment. The complete capture of the Palace and the city took time, but the storming of Kashmiri Gate turned the tide in favour of the British forces.

Till the 1960s, vehicles going north used to pass *through* Kashmiri Gate. Later, a wide road was cut to the east, making the gate an island almost surrounded by heavy traffic movement.

The dome of St James' Church is visible in both photographs.









1.24 'Mori' Bastion

Mori* Gate (also called Badru Darwaza) was along a straight line of the city wall running south-west. Further west was the Mori Bastion (or Shah Bastion) between Mori Gate and Kabul Gate. It was from this bastion that the rebels had pounded the Ridge in August. On 9 September 1857, as the first stage of the assault on the city wall and bastions, Mori Bastion was attacked from batteries at a distance of 550 yards, at the foot of the Ridge (Lang, 83). On the fateful 14th of September, Lang and some others dashed from Kashmiri Gate towards Kabul Gate, with the wall on their right and the line of houses on their left (later this narrow road was to be named after Nicholson).

'We took tower after tower, and gun after gun, never stopping. On the Mori I shouted out to line the parapet and give three cheers; bad advice! for we were fired on from our own batteries' (Lang, 92). The battered Bastion still stands, and is protected with a railing, though it is doubtful if people today know what it was.

* 'Mori' is Hindi/Urdu for water-channel. The canal entered Delhi through Kabul Gate, but it is possible that there was some device to control the flow of water in the moat at this point. Hence the name.









1.25 The Bank

The Delhi Bank, which had many Delhi men of business as shareholders, was established in 1847 in the stately building bought from David Sombre, the heir of Begum Samru. This remarkable woman, whose name was a corruption of 'Le Sombre', the popular name of the Frenchman she married, had her own private army and vast properties inherited from her husband, or given to her. The classical mansion that she built in a large garden gifted to her by Badshah Akbar Shah II in 1806, was very similar to another she built at Sardhana, in 1834. It was the scene of many elegant banquets; Mrs Deare wrote about a dinner party hosted by Begum Samru in 1809 (A. Deare, 169). In 1922 the Palace was to be bought by Lala Bhagirath, since when it has been called Bhagirath Palace, a beehive of banks and shops, including the largest wholesale electrical goods market in Delhi (J. Lall, 104).

On 11 May 1857, the Manager of the Bank, Mr Beresford, defended himself and his family on the roof of an outhouse of the Bank, but was killed by the rebels. On 17 September Lang wrote that 'the 52nd [Movable Cavalry] took the Bank — walked quietly into it — but no further advance was made. I fancy that the drunkenness of the Europeans prevents an advance. Though hundreds of rupees worth of beer, wines and spirits are smashed, still the men get drunk' (Lang, 94).





1.26 Lahori Gate of Palace

The west gate of the Palace and that in the city wall were both called 'Lahori'. The barbican in front of the Lahori Gate of the Palace was a later addition, by Badshah Aurangzeb, on the site of what had been a garden in his father's reign. *North* of the barbican was a big maidan where horses and elephants were paraded. On 11 May 1857, the soldiers from Meerut entered the Palace by Lahori Gate, after coming into the city from the Raj Ghat Gate at Daryaganj (Fanshawe, 21).

Lang's diary entry for 20 September reads: 'We marched straight up to the Lahore Gate of the Palace; there I spied through chinks in the great big doors and saw four great guns . . . pointing within 10 feet of the door. I went back for powder; meanwhile [Lt] Home had been coming with some and while I was away he blew in the Gate' (Lang, 97).

For a short time after 1857 the Lahori Gate and Delhi Gate of the Palace were renamed 'Victoria' and 'Alexandra', a practice of renaming which the governments of independent India have also been prone to. Today tourists enter the Palace from Lahori Gate.





1.27 *Saman Burj of Palace*

This is, correctly, the Musamman Burj (Octagonal Tower). Shah Jahan's Palace had three burjs on the eastern/river front — from north to south, Shah Burj, Musamman Burj and Asad Burj. 'The Summun Burj' wrote Thomas Metcalfe in 1844 '[is] a very favourite apartment of the present King [Bahadur Shah] and in which all interviews with the Agents of a strictly private nature are held' (Kaye, 79).

The octagonal tower overlooked the river, and was next to the Tasbih Khana. Under the tower was a postern gate which led to the river. Captain Douglas of the King's Guard had tried to have this opened on 11 May 1857, so that he could go and speak to the rebels (Fanshawe, 38).

This chamber, like the rest of the Palace, passed into British army occupation after 1857. The open area between the Khwabgah and the Diwan-e-Khas (both identifiable from the chhajjas) has in this picture been joined by a wall with two storeys of rooms behind, later demolished when conservation work was undertaken at the Palace on Curzon's initiative. The Khwabgah was between the Rang Mahal and the Diwan-e-Khas. Beato's photograph also shows the tower without its crowning dome, which can be seen in earlier paintings, and which is seen as damaged in a photograph taken soon after September 1857. The remainder of the broken dome was demolished, and later reconstructed in cement by the British, as can be seen from the modern photograph.

Today Mahatma Gandhi Road (Ring Road) runs parallel to the eastern Palace wall, where the river once flowed. The open area below the walls is the site for a cheerful Sunday bazaar.





1.28 Portion of Palace and Salimgarh

The last photograph in this first album brings us round full circle, back to Salimgarh, near the Bridge of Boats. The former was built in the mid-sixteenth century and was named for Salim Shah Sur, the son of Sher Shah the Pathan who supplanted Humayun on the throne for some years. This island fort enclosed by the Yamuna was renamed Nurgarh (Fort of Light) by the Mughals who did not care to be reminded of the Surs. Shah Jahan's perfectly symmetrical plan for an octagonal fort was modified to add a wedge corresponding to Salimgarh and linked to it by a bridge which is supposed to have been built by Jahangir, presumably to connect the small fort to the mainland (Koch, 103–17). The pavilion of the Shah Burj, which also had a dome as seen in earlier paintings (but which, unlike the Musamman Burj, was not rebuilt) was the private territory of the royal family, and at the ground level the *nahr-e-behisht* (Canal of Paradise) flowed from here south through the Palace chambers.

The modern photograph shows the Burj considerably improved by efforts at conservation. Salimgarh (concealed by trees), was till 1995 under military occupation, as is much of the Red Fort, but that year part of it was handed over to the Archaeological Survey of India, which has charge of two museums — one on Gandhiji's life, the other on the Indian National Army. The I.N.A., founded by Subhas Chandra Bose in October 1943, is associated with Salimgarh by the fact of its leaders having been imprisoned here while the British government conducted their trial in the Red Fort in 1945.





Volume Two

2.1 House (within the Palace walls) in which the King was Confined

The city was stormed on 14 September 1857, but it was only on the 20th that the British forces captured and looted the King's Palace. Bahadur Shah, a feeble man in his 80s, had been torn between his wish to lead the forces into battle, and to accept Hakim Ahsanullah's suggestion that he dissociate himself from the rebels and leave the city. He took refuge in the tomb of his ancestor Humayun, guarded by a large number of armed men. Mirza Ilahi Baksh told Major Hodson of the King's whereabouts, whereupon Hodson went out to arrest him for trial, with the guarantee that he would not be killed. He was brought back to the Fort, but not to his own apartments. He was confined in a house on the west side of the street (within the Palace) which led north from the Delhi Gate of the Palace, bisected lengthwise by the canal. 'The ground floor on the street side had been used for shops, so that the house was well above the street. It consisted of three rooms, with a courtyard on the north and south sides. There was a European sentry posted in each courtyard, and one native sentry on the garden side to the west below, and one in the street' (Colonel Ommaney, in Fanshawe, 42).

The trial of the King dragged on from 5 January till 29 March 1858.

Since 1858 this area has been army territory, so it is not possible to take a photograph of it.



2.2 Panorama from 'Hindu Rao's' house

'From [Hindu Rao's House] there is a beautiful view of our whole position and of Delhi' (Lang, 68, 13 August 1857). This panorama would have been more appropriate in Volume I; in this Volume, it is rather inexplicably placed between two views of the Palace.

In 1997, as in 1857, the Jama Masjid minarets and the dome of St James' Church are clearly visible; Ludlow Castle is no more, and Metcalfe House is hidden by tall blocks of government buildings. The barren Ridge is now densely covered with shrubs and low trees, though much of it further south has been so totally given over to buildings that in 1995 it was found necessary to declare what remained a 'protected forest'.













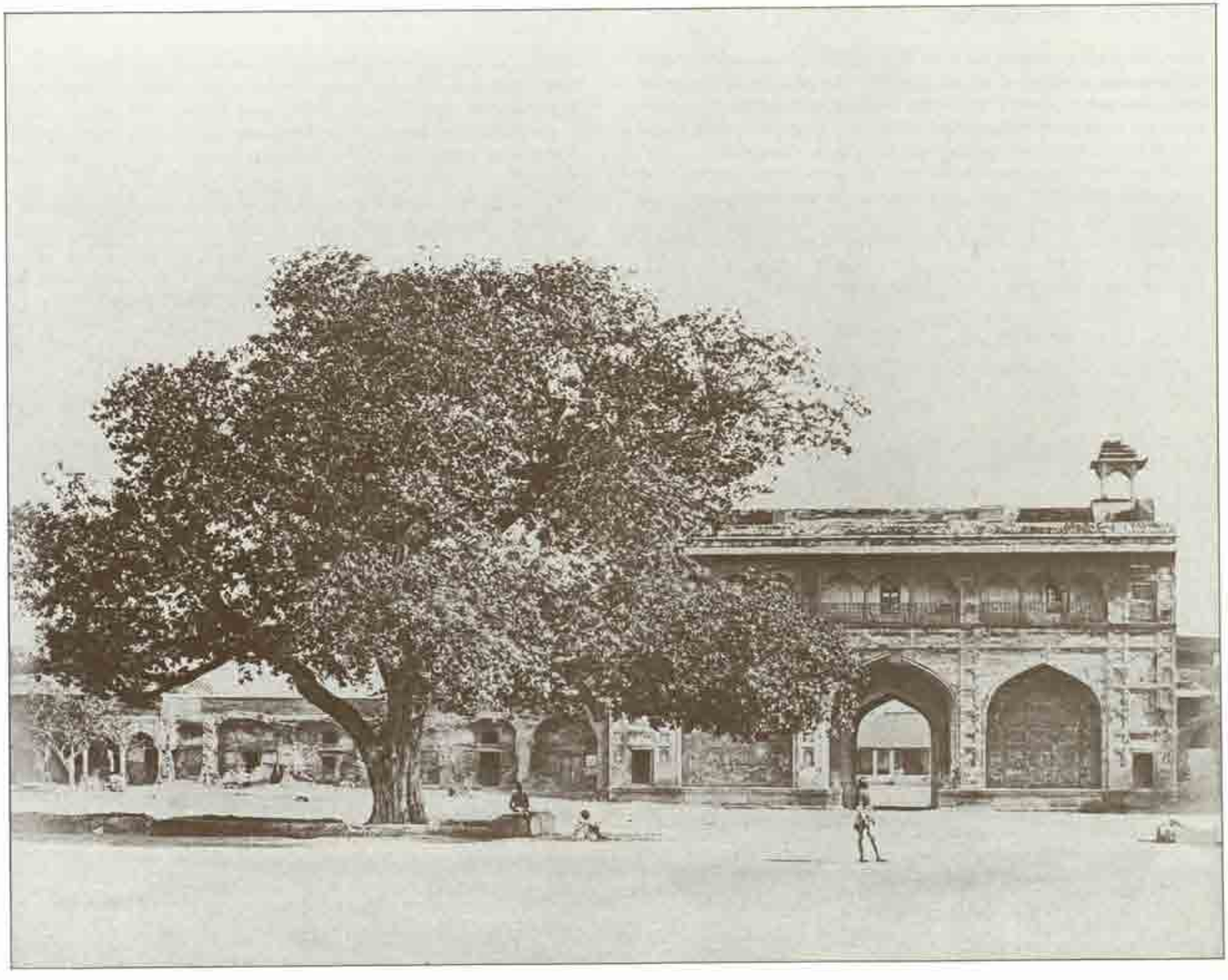
2.3 *Inner Gateway of Palace, with the tree under which the Christians were Massacred*

The 'Inner Gateway' is the Naqqar Khana (Drum House) which separates the public area in the foreground from the semi-public area dominated by the Diwan-i-Am (Hall of Public Audience). The Naqqar Khana was in the middle of the eastern side of a square enclosure (the Jiluakhana), corresponding on the west to the entrance of the Chhatta Chowk (covered bazaar) which opened into Lahori Gate.

On 16 May 1857 the Eurasian and Indian Christians from Daryaganj who had been captured and brought to the Palace were taken to the Jiluakhana and killed, despite Bahadur Shah's pleas that they be spared. Many of the victims were women. The account of this cowardly deed was to be so highly exaggerated that, when the British forces captured Delhi in September 1857, many of them slaughtered women and children in what they thought was retribution (Llewellyn, 133).

Of the enclosure only the Naqqar Khana survives; it houses a museum of weapons and armoury on the first floor. The signboard seen in the recent photograph directs visitors to yet another museum — the 'Swatantrata Sangram Sangrahalaya' ('Museum of the Freedom Movement') located in one of the buildings of the British army barracks.





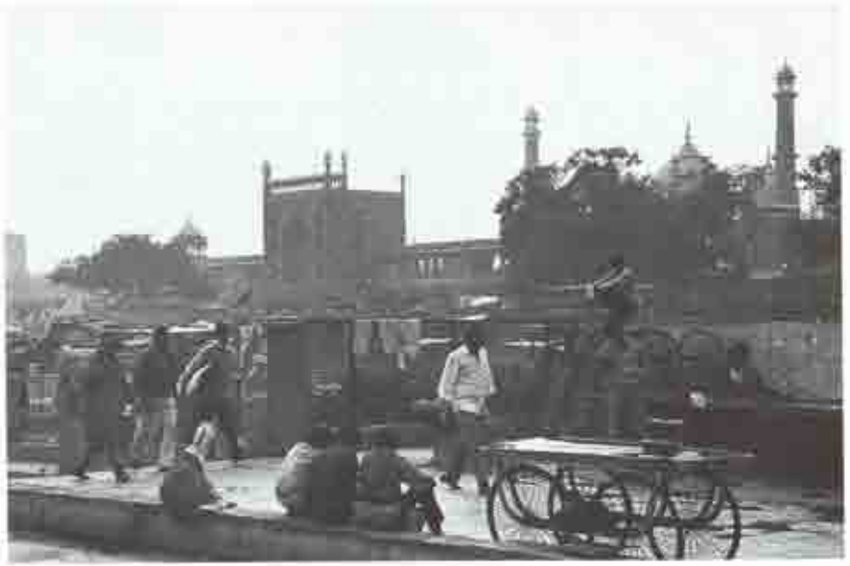
2.4, 2.5 The 'Juma Masjid'

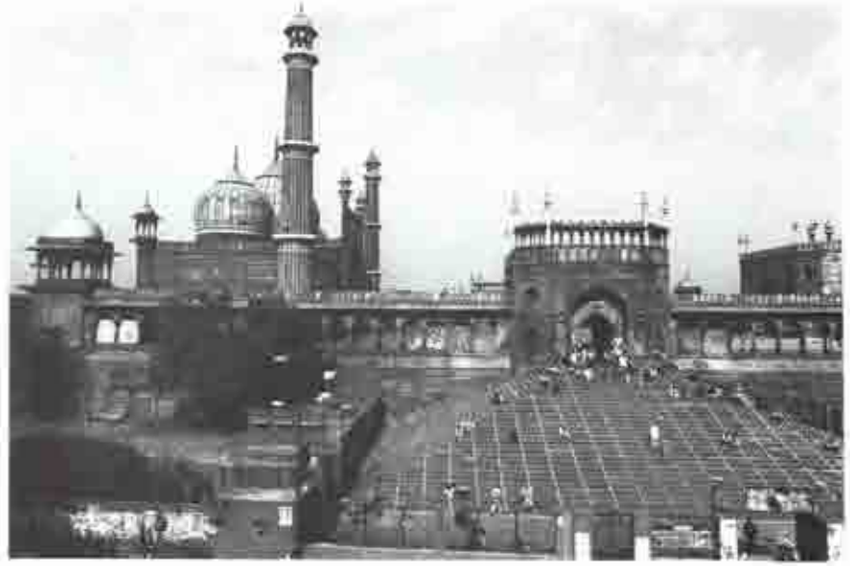
Shah Jahan's Jama Masjid, built on Bhojla Pahari, was easily the most conspicuous landmark in the Mughal city. The British soldiers on the Ridge had got to know it well: 'The city looked beautiful . . . a faint rosy light tinging the white domes of the Jama Masjid, while the lower part of the building was fading away in twilight' (Lang, 60).

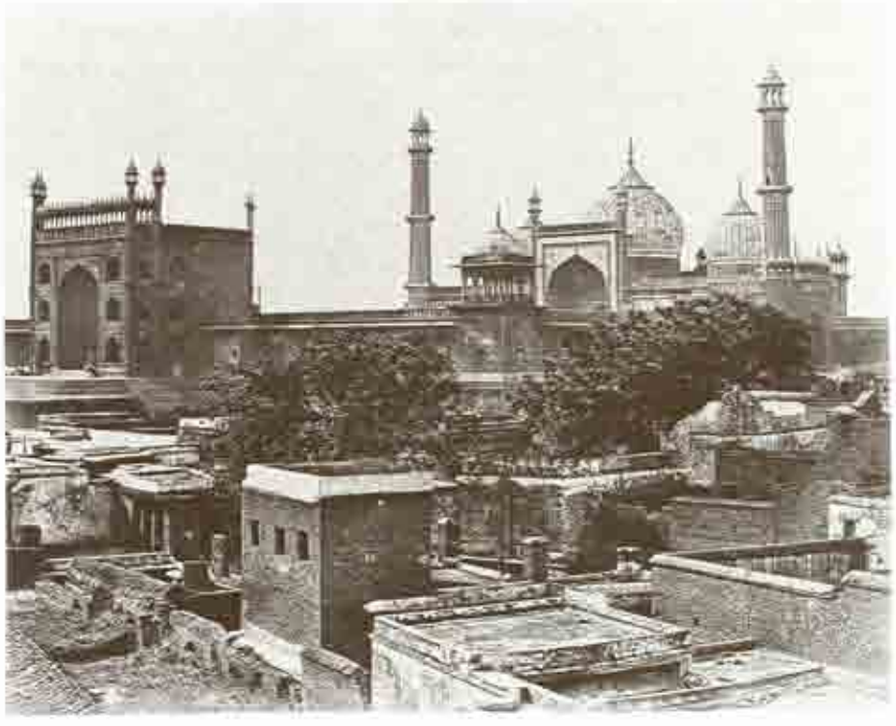
After 'taking' it on 20 September 1857 (something which should have been done on the 14th, but delayed because of the drunkenness of the soldiers), Captain Taylor rode his horse up the steps of the Masjid.

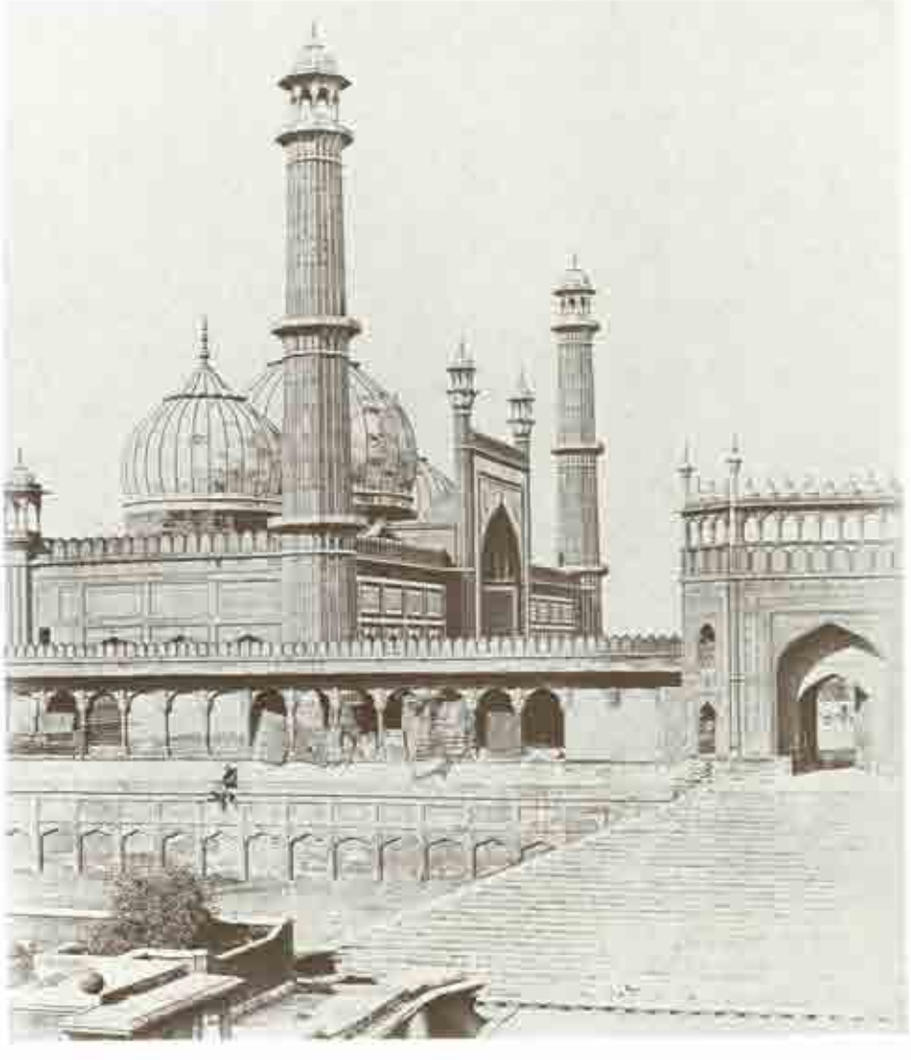
Immediately after the capture of Delhi there had been suggestions that the Masjid be demolished, and a cathedral built in its place. Luckily, sanity prevailed, and in 1861 the newly-formed Archaeological Survey of India took on the responsibility of seeing to the maintenance of the Masjid. But for five years the Masjid was silent, as it remained under official control. Only in 1862 was it re-opened for prayer.

2.4 shows the mosque from the north-eastern side, 2.5 from the south. The eastern (main) entrance is closed, and the mosque is entered from the south or the north. The Jama Masjid, like all places of worship, has always generated a range of activities — shops, schools, discussions, theatricals. Today the area indicates the underlying conflict between official agencies seeking to 'beautify' the surrounding area — in the last resort by fencing off sections — and the people seeking to 'colonize' it by putting up shops and shelters.



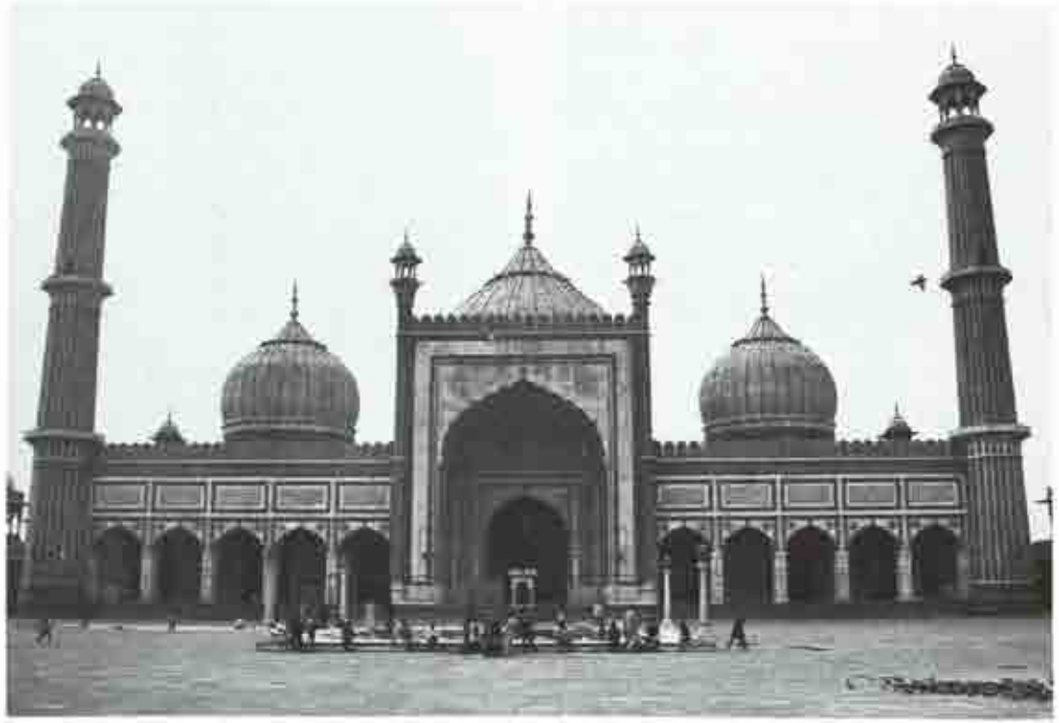


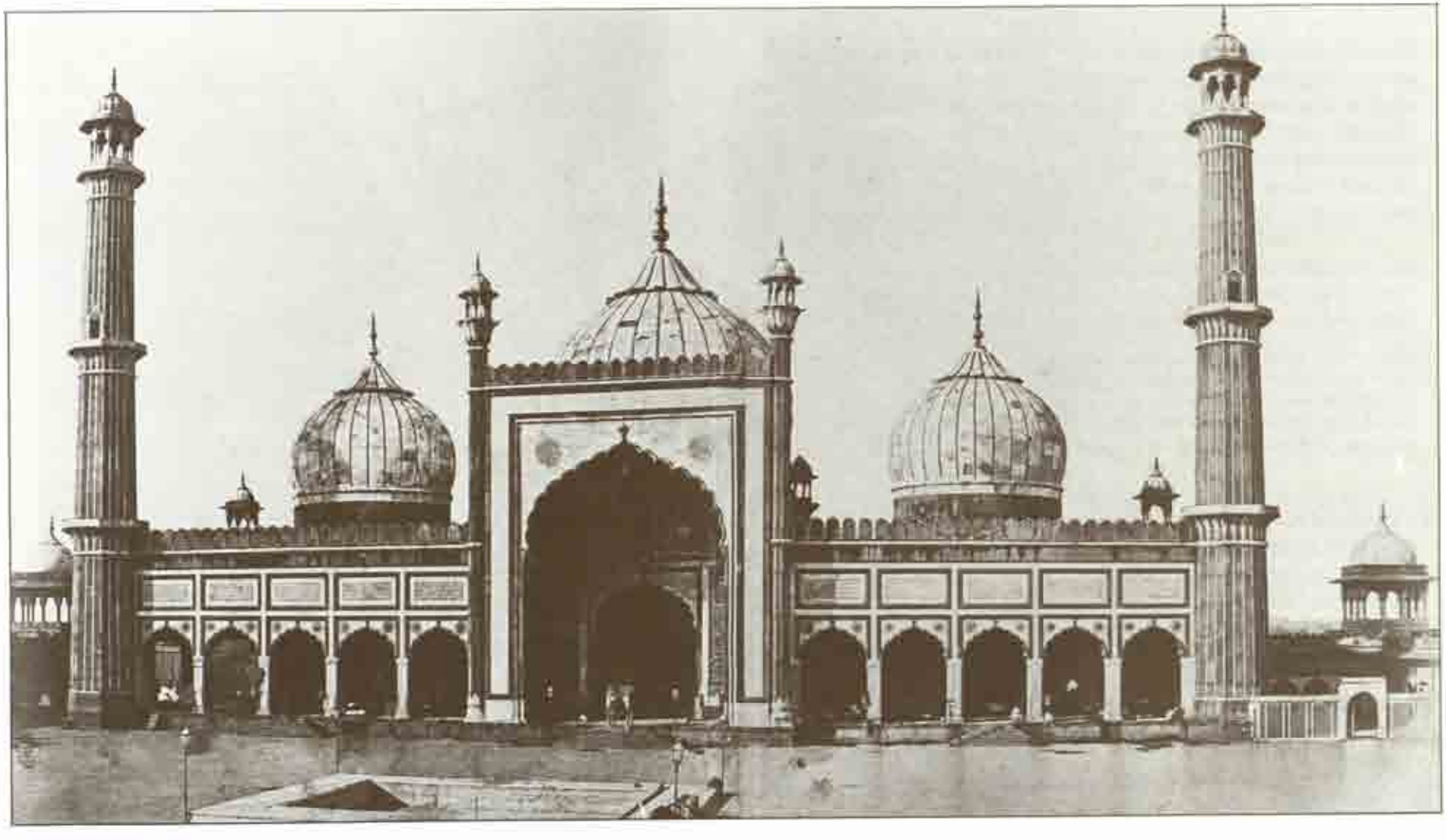




2.6 Interior of the 'Juma Masjid'

The massive courtyard of one of India's largest mosques (Bhopal's Jama Masjid is larger) is remarkable for its tranquillity, despite being located in the heart of a crowded city. Though the Jama Masjid was under military occupation for five years after 1857, it was not vandalized, as the King's Palace was. Apart from necessary minor repairs, nothing has changed. The mosque commands a massive congregation and its Imam is a major public figure.





2.7 Jain Temple

From this point in the Album there are over a dozen views of buildings or streetscapes which have no direct association with the Rising. One such is this temple, the Sri Digamber Jain Naya Mandir, between Chandni Chowk and the Jama Masjid. Many of the Hindu and Jain merchants of Delhi had been neutral or had helped the British secretly, so their shrines were not desecrated after 1857, as the Jama Masjid was.

Pre-1857 Shahjahanabad had 147 temples and 246 mosques (Kaye, 34). A large number of Jain shrines and houses are clustered in this area (called Dharmpura), on land gifted by Badshah Aurangzeb. The Jains were important bankers during Mughal rule.

There were numbers of beautiful mosques in Delhi, and Jain temples. The latter beautiful buildings were of quite a different style of architecture to the Mohammedan mosque, but I never penetrated into a Jain temple until after the Mutiny, when in 1859 I went to Delhi and got the good incense that we still burn at Ascot (Emily Bayley, Kaye, 210).

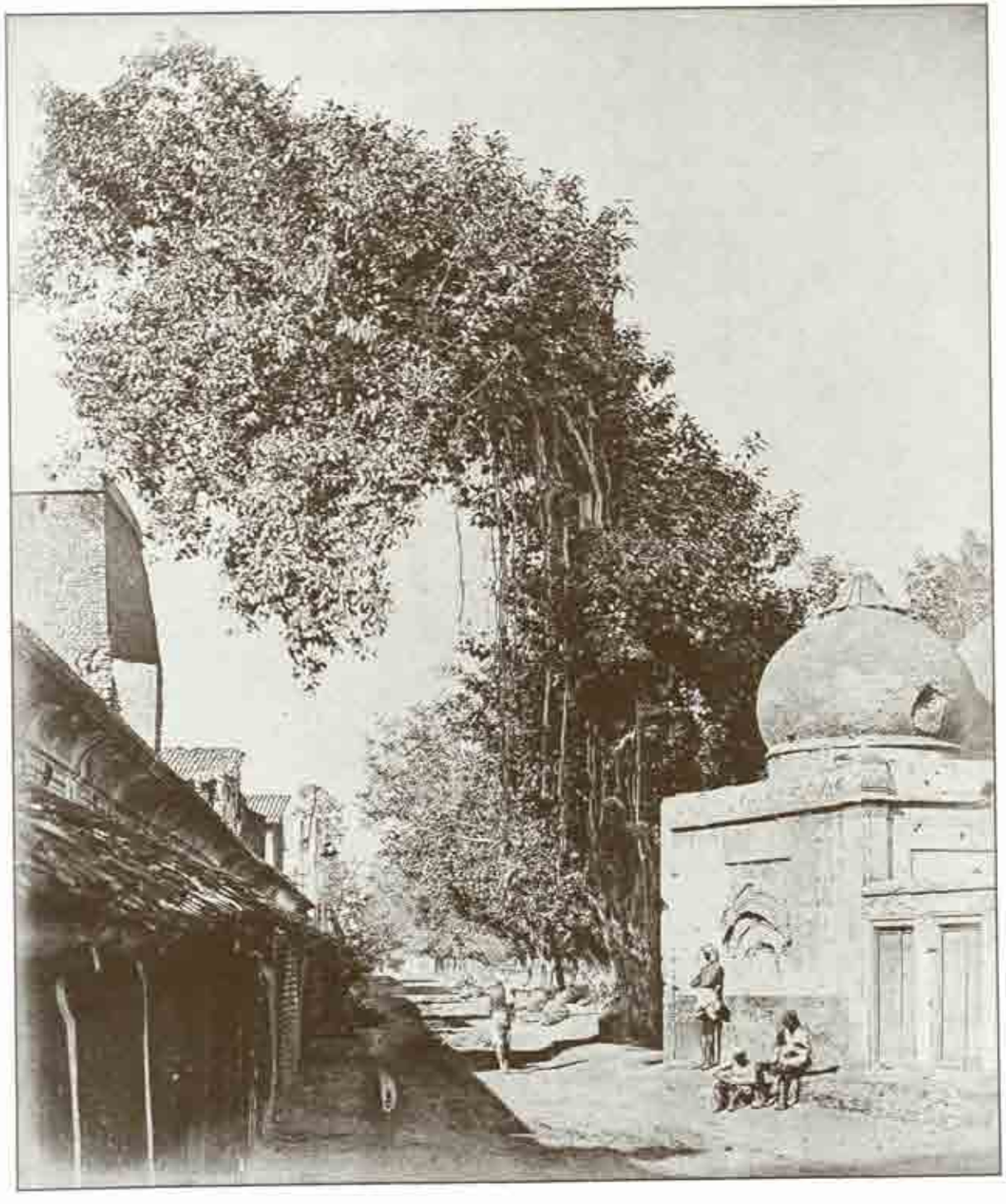
'If the whole could be transported to Italy, and a statue of the Virgin substituted for the idol, its beauty would be raved about' wrote Mrs R.M. King in 1878 (Kaul, 292). James Fergusson in his work on Indian architecture (1876) had a sketch of this temple, as a specimen of the 'Hindu/Jain' architecture of this period (Fergusson, II, 66–7). In this, as in other Jain temples, there have been changes and additions over the years, though the interiors still retain their original beauty.





2.8 *Street and Mosque*

This is perhaps the only view which does not show a monument or a site either associated with the Rising or of historic significance. In the absence of any evidence to help identify it, it could be conjectured that the street is in Daryaganj, where some of the Indian Christians and the junior British clerks lived, or in Paharganj, a western suburb. Neither area was densely built up, and there were streets which had trees on one side. Small shrines such as this are very common and may have been built to commemorate a saint.



2.9 Gateway and Mosque

This is another unidentified photograph. The mosque is distinctly Mughal, and has a family resemblance to the mosques next to Safdarjang's Tomb and at the Qudsia Gardens, the Moti Masjid in the Lal Qila, and the Sunehri Masjid south of the Lal Qila's Delhi Gate. It is very similar to the Sunehri Masjid of Roshanuddaula (see illustration in Kaye, 32), located next to the Kotwali (presently the campus of the Sisganj Gurdwara). From here Nadir Shah in 1739 issued the order for the punishment of the people of Delhi, when they defied his directive to fix grain prices. Sunehri Masjid, however, did not have a gateway such as that in the photograph. A more plausible identification is with the Masjid Kalan Mahal located south-west of the big Akbarabadi Masjid. These are both clearly drawn in the 1842 map of Delhi (Ehlers and Krafft); both masjids were demolished in 1858, when an arc 500 yards wide was cleared around the Red Fort to provide a shooting range. The area where the mosques stood was made into a garden (see 1.2 above).



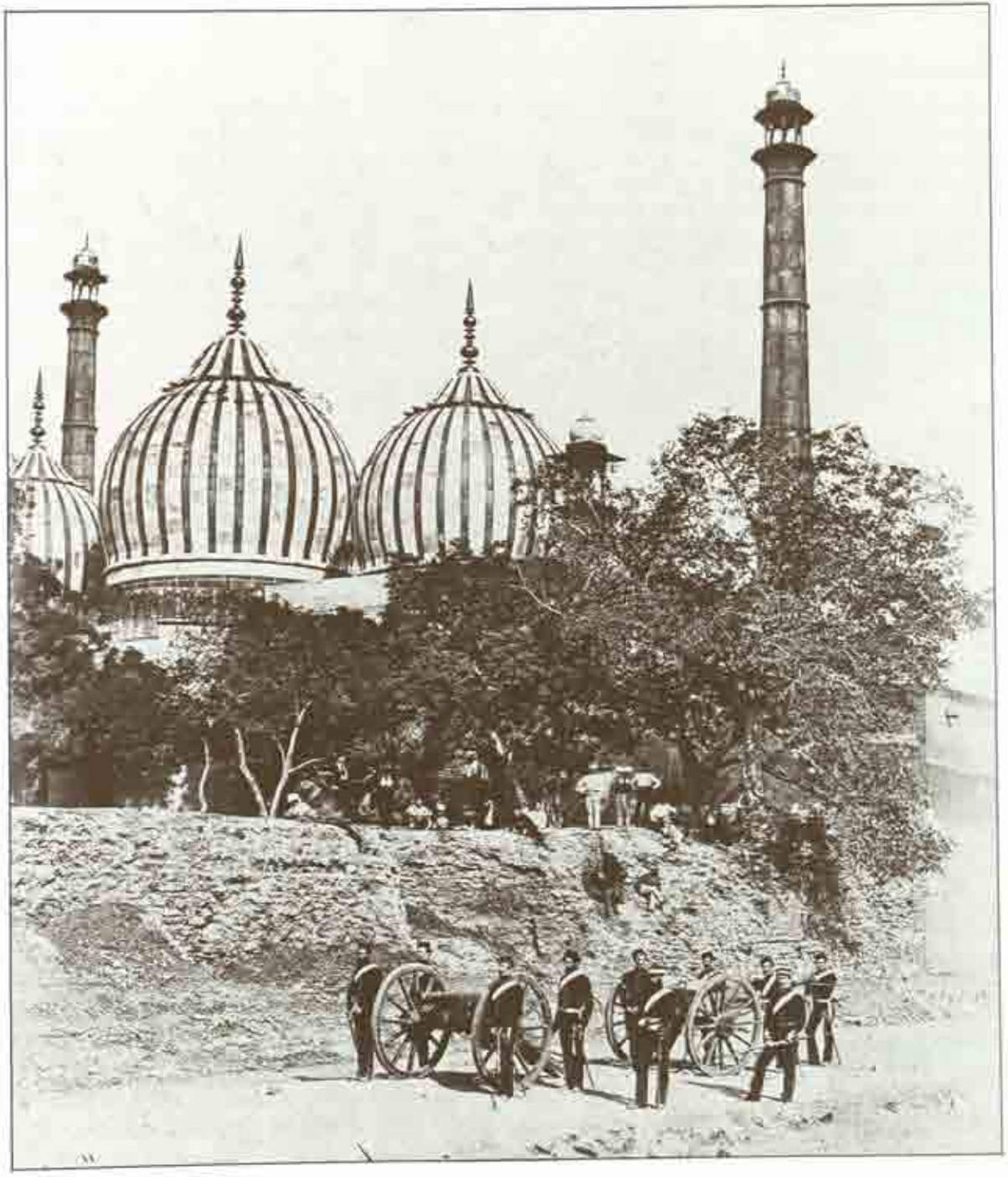
2.10 'Zinat-ul-Masajid', Mosque at the 'Khairati' Gate with Guns of Tombs' Troop H Art.

Zinat-ul-Masajid ('Most Beautiful of Mosques'), on the eastern side of Daryaganj, is the most striking-looking mosque in Delhi after the Jama Masjid. As part of a deliberate 'desacralizing' policy after 1857, which dictated the closure of the Jama Masjid and the auctioning of Fatehpuri Masjid (till it was bought back by the government in 1877 and restored for worship), Zinat-ul-Masajid was used as a bakery.

Major H. Tombs was one of the heroes on the British side in 1857. He had arrived from Meerut with his horse artillery ('troop H Art.') in May 1857, and on 3 July turned a critical battle against the rebels into a victory.

The Masjid, popularly called Ghata ('Cloud') Masjid, is a major landmark in Daryaganj today. As elsewhere, it is now masked by trees. The gun-carriages have been replaced by Marutis, the increasing number of which are choking the roads and lanes of Shah Jahan's city.





2.11 *House in the 'Chandni Chauk'*

Mrs Coopland was to write in 1859:

> The Chandney Chowk . . . quite astonished us by its gay appearance, for Delhi was in our minds associated with nothing but gloom and desolation. The natives either mingled in crowds or sat before their shops . . . with raised trays before them, on which they displayed embroidered shawls, skull-caps, toys. . . . The street was crowded with English soldiers in their bright uniforms, Seikhs on their wild looking steeds, funny little Ghoorkas, European ladies riding on immense elephants, and gentlemen on camels, horses and ponies. Altogether the azure blue sky formed an enlivening scene, and one might have forgotten the fearful things that had so lately taken place, but for two large gallows in the middle of the street (Coopland, 252).

In Beato's 'sombre' view not only the colours, but the British, Sikhs and 'funny little Gurkhas' who had captured Delhi, are missing. The house in the centre is typical of the happy eclecticism seen in most Indian houses then and later, where Indian arches and chhajjas are surmounted by Greek pediments and balustrades. In the recent photograph, the sidewalks have been converted into passages, extra rooms built on the roofs, and the buildings divided up amongst numerous tenants. Chandni Chowk is very crowded during the day but less people *live* there than twenty years ago. More and more flats are becoming commercial premises.





2.12 'Humayun's Tomb' (6 miles from Delhi, halfway to the Kuth) where Hodson captured the King

The tomb of Badshah Humayun (completed 1565) was a shrine which later Mughal rulers used to visit. Many members of the royal family are buried here, though the later rulers preferred Mehrauli, near the shrine of Bakhtiyar Kaki. On 19–20 September 1857 Bahadur Shah left his Palace for Humayun's Tomb, along with his sons and numerous attendants. From there he was persuaded by Major Hodson to return to the city to face trial; Hodson is later remembered for his horrifyingly cold-blooded act of murdering four Mughal princes whom he took back, at the Sher Shah Gateway south of Shahjahanabad. This has since been known as Khooni Darwaza ('Bloodstained Gateway').

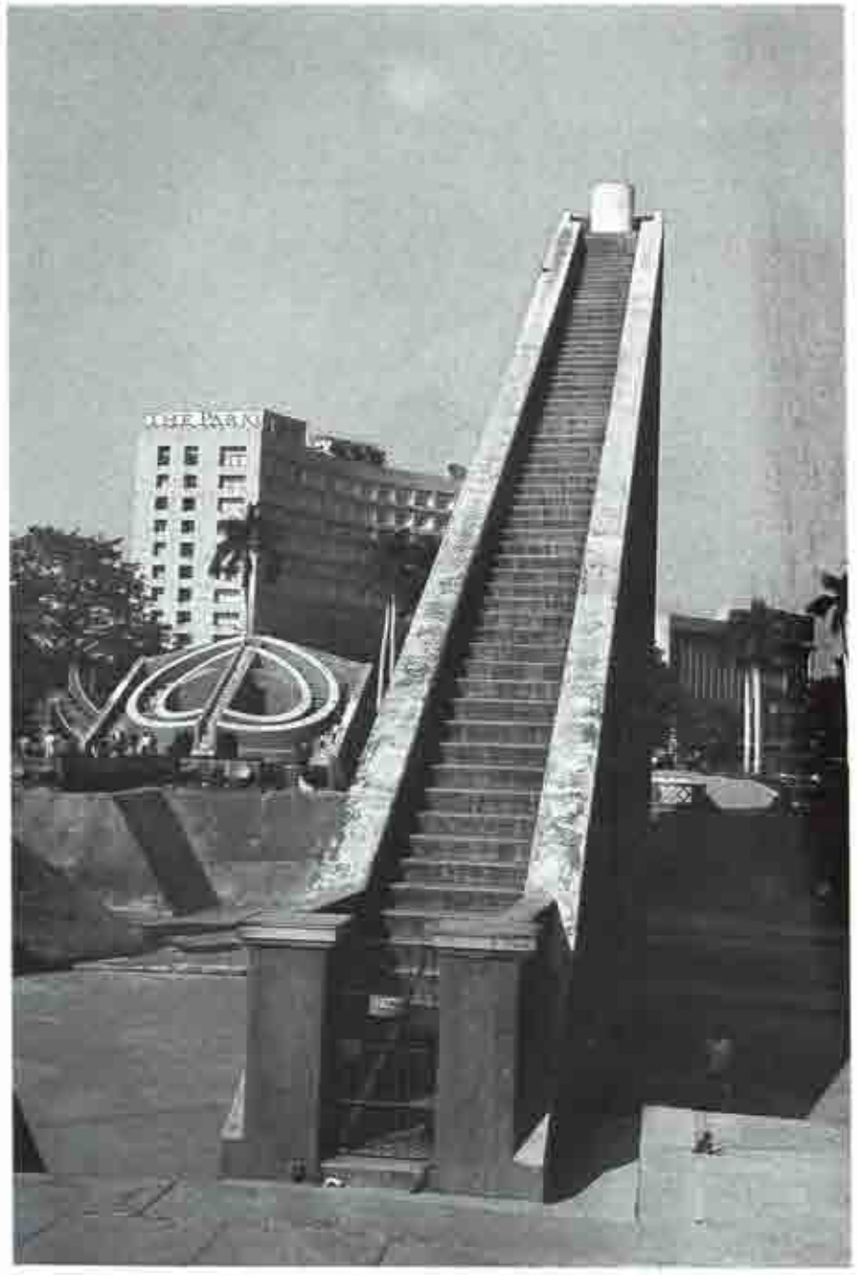
Humayun's Tomb, deservedly a World Heritage Site, is one of the best-maintained of Delhi's monuments, with its well-kept formal lawns and the other buildings near by, including the Nila Gumbad seen in the background of Beato's photograph. Dense foliage makes it impossible to recapture Beato's view, where the platform on which the mausoleum stands is hidden behind the boundary wall adjoining the gateway on the right. The spacious setting of the char-bagh garden is missing in the photograph.

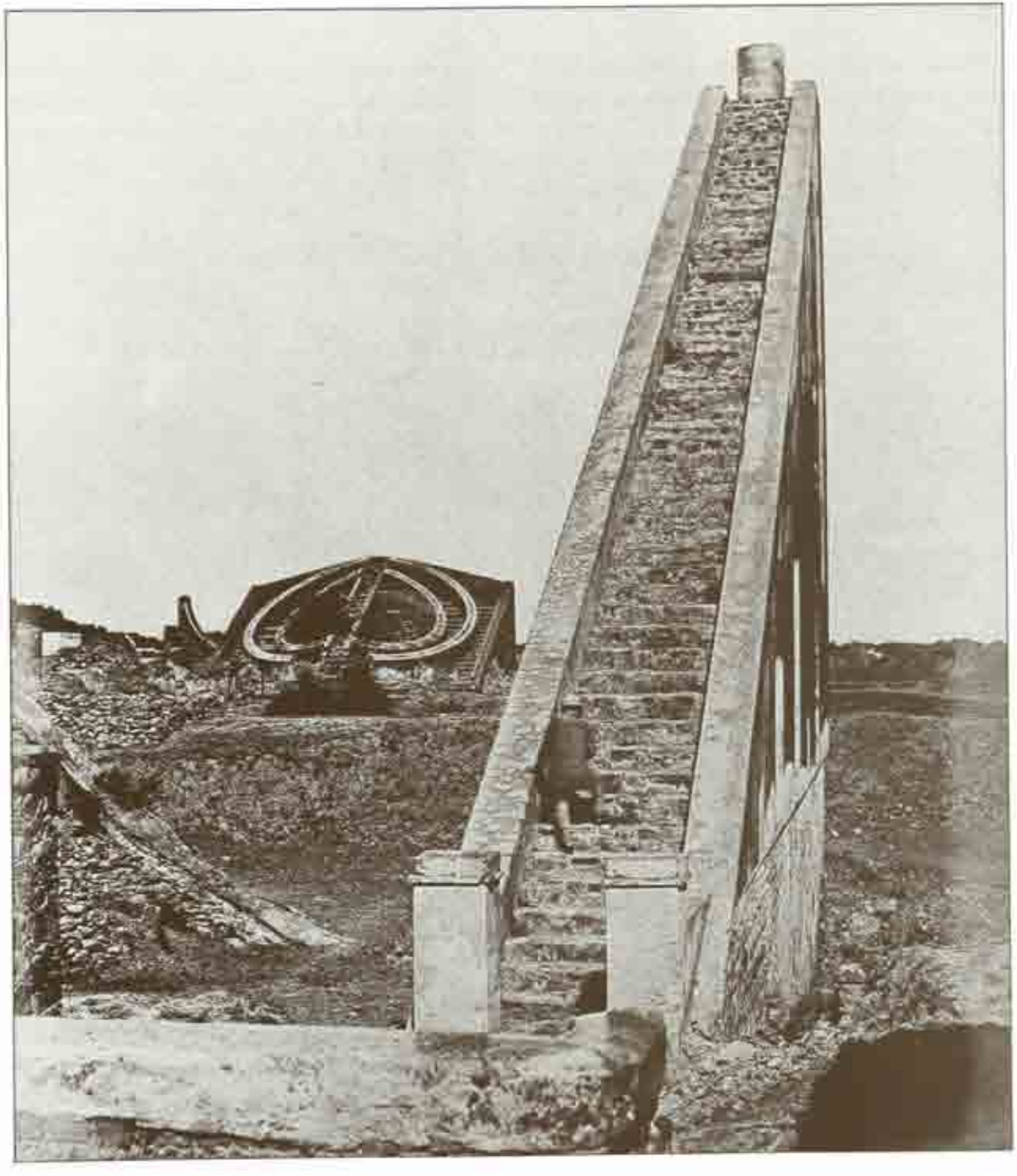




2.13 Old Observatory — near Delhi

The Jantar Mantar was one of five observatories built in the 1720s by Raja Jai Singh II of Jaipur, in the estate named for him — Jaisinghpura — which was some distance south from Shahjahanabad. It is adjacent to Connaught Place, the circular shopping arcade designed by Lutyens for New Delhi in the 1920s. Today, the various structures are pleasantly situated in a park. But they are becoming increasingly dwarfed by tall buildings constructed near by, one of which has used perspex glass so liberally as to affect the functioning of the observatory.





2.14 *Tomb of 'Safdar Jang'*

The Madrasa and tomb of Mansur Safdarjang is a memorial to an able administrator who, however, made his province of Awadh (eastern Uttar Pradesh) practically independent of the Mughals in 1751. Safdarjang laid out a garden in his Aliganj estate, where his mausoleum was to be built. Though architectural historians have been less than kind in their appraisal of this building, the efforts of the Archaeological Survey here, as with Humayun's Tomb, have created an island of peace and beauty.





2.15, 2.16 The 'Kuth Minar' — 12 miles from Delhi

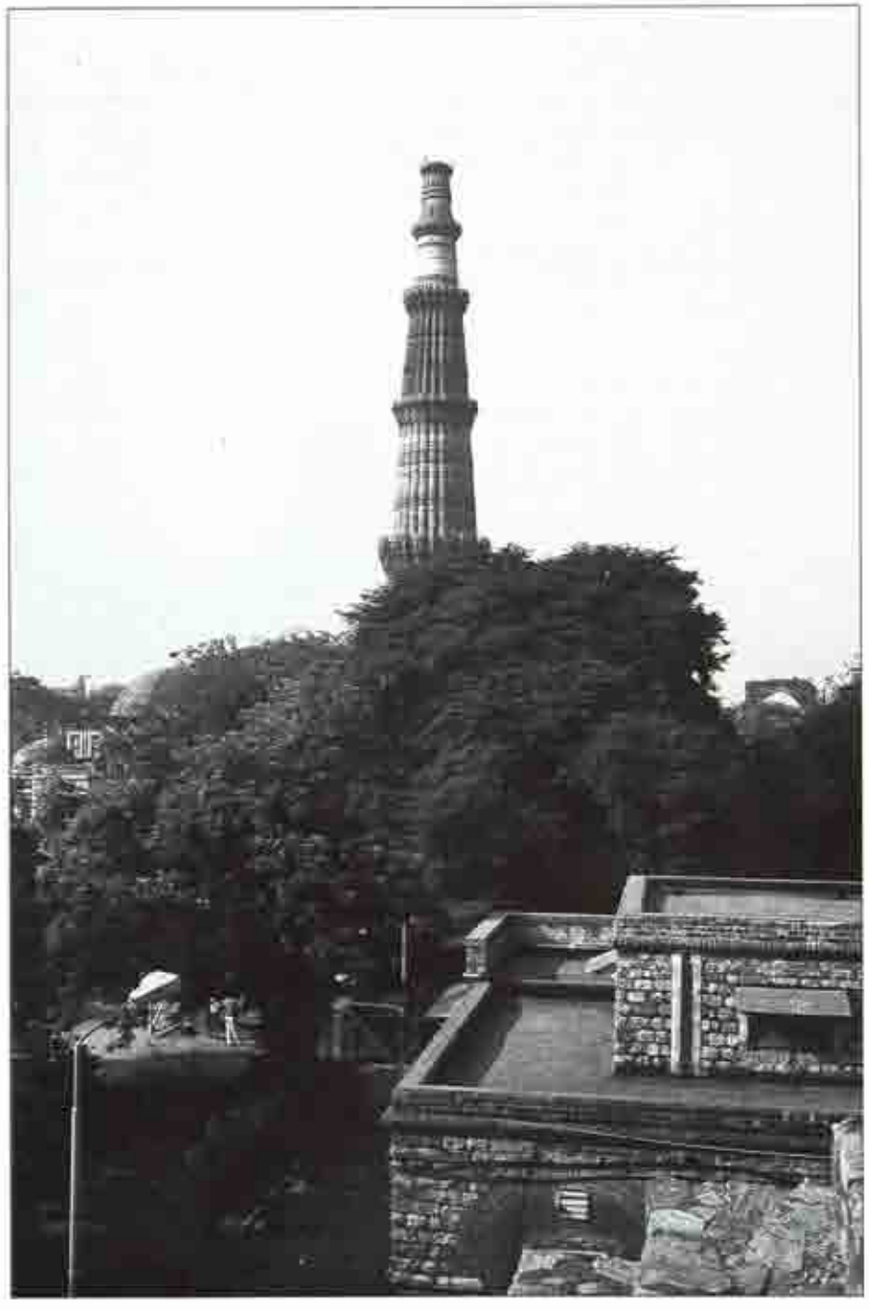
The Qutb, today designated a World Heritage Monument, was one building which all European visitors appear to have regarded with unqualified admiration.

'After all that had been said' confessed Emily Eden in 1838, 'I expected the Kootub would have been rather inferior to the Monument'.* When she saw it, she could only describe it by saying 'It appears to be the Monument put at the top of the column in the place Vendome**, and that again placed on a still grander base. . . . It is between six and seven hundred years old, and looks as if it were finished yesterday, and it stands in a wilderness of ruins, carved gateways, and marble tombs, one more beautiful than the others' (Eden, 99).

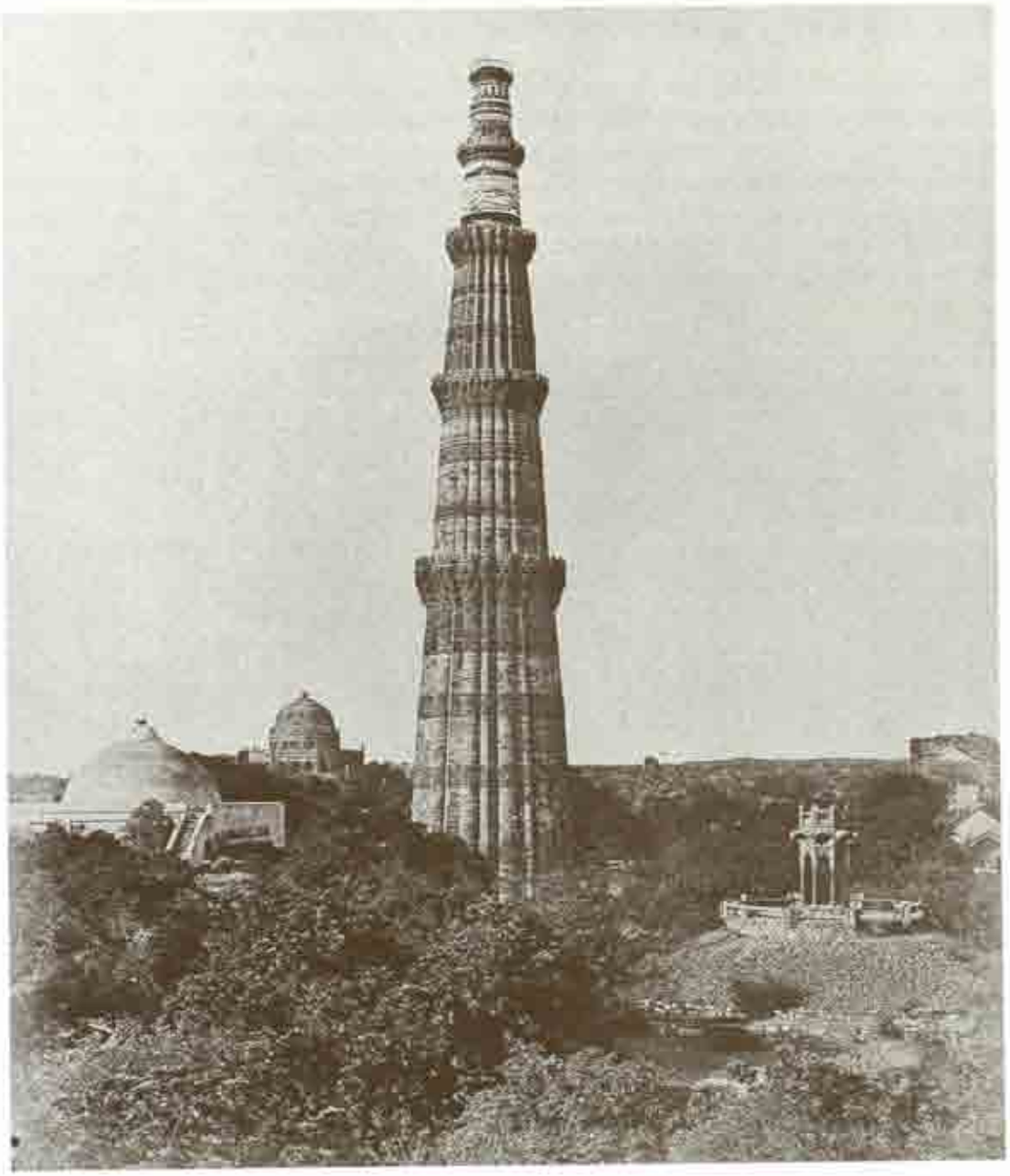
Emily Eden's enthusiasm must have been shared by her brother, Governor-General Lord Auckland, who set aside funds for the maintenance of the Minar and other buildings near by. In the photograph, the dome of the Alai Darwaza, the gateway near the Minar, and an arch of the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque can be seen. In the foreground is the cupola once placed atop the Qutb by the same engineer, Major Robert Smith, who had built Kashmiri Gate. Governor-General Hardinge, who did not like this appendage, ordered its removal in 1848. It still forms part of the landscape near the Minar. In the distance is the tomb of Adham Khan, built in the reign of the Mughal Badshah Akbar I. Fullgrown trees hide it from view in the recent picture.

Many of those who fled Delhi after the British captured the city in 1857, took refuge near the Qutb.

* i.e. Nelson's Monument at Trafalgar Square in London.
** in Paris.





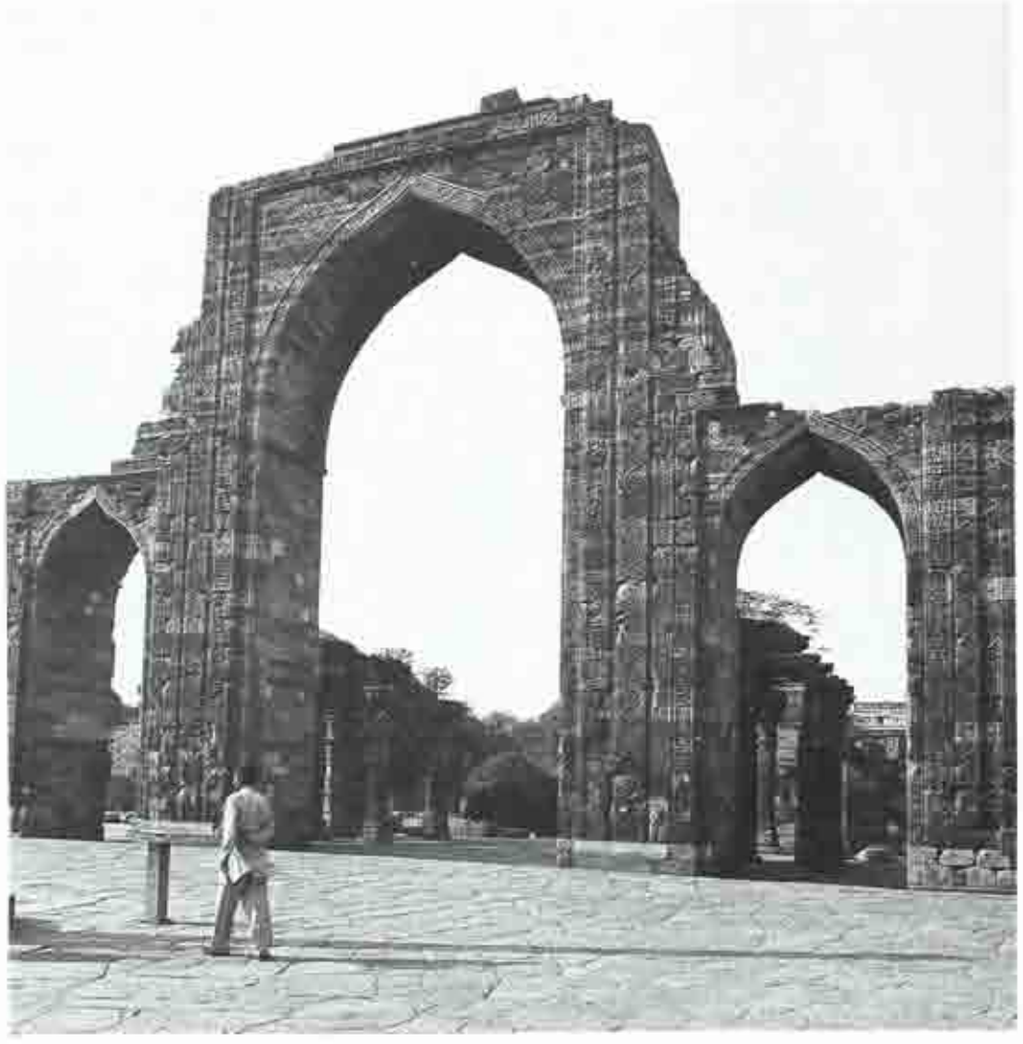


2.17, 2.18 Arches, and Iron Pillar (Lat) near the Kutb

This fourth-century pillar that stands framed by an early thirteenth-century arch has been a puzzle to scientists, on account of the fact that it never rusts. Beato may have been the first to photograph this view of the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque, which is unfailingly photographed by all visitors to the Qutb. Visitors used to enjoy trying to encircle the pillar with their arms — a great future is said to await the person who can do this successfully. Now (since the recent photograph was taken) there is a barrier to discourage close contact with the pillar.

The arches of the Masjid are the first example of the pointed arch in Indian architecture. What is interesting about these is that the local builders who were commissioned by Sultan Qutbuddin Aibak ignored or did not know the principle of the keystone, so that 'they proceeded to make the pointed opening on the same principle upon which they built their domes. They carried them up in horizontal courses as far as they could, and then closed them by long slabs meeting at the top' (Fergusson, II, 650). These are clearly visible in the photograph.







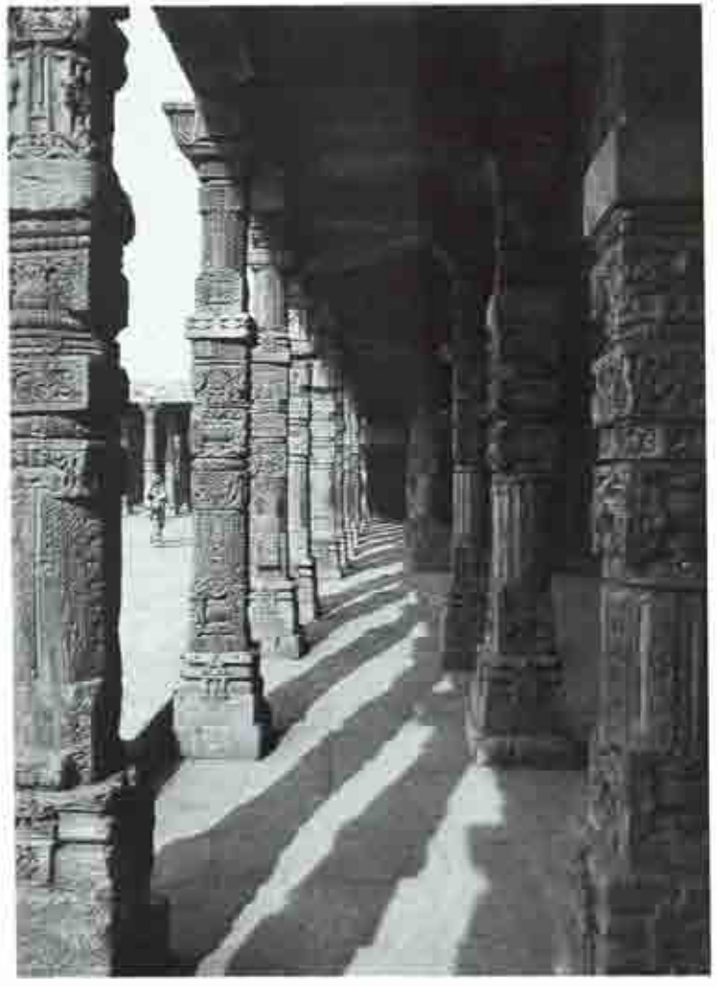


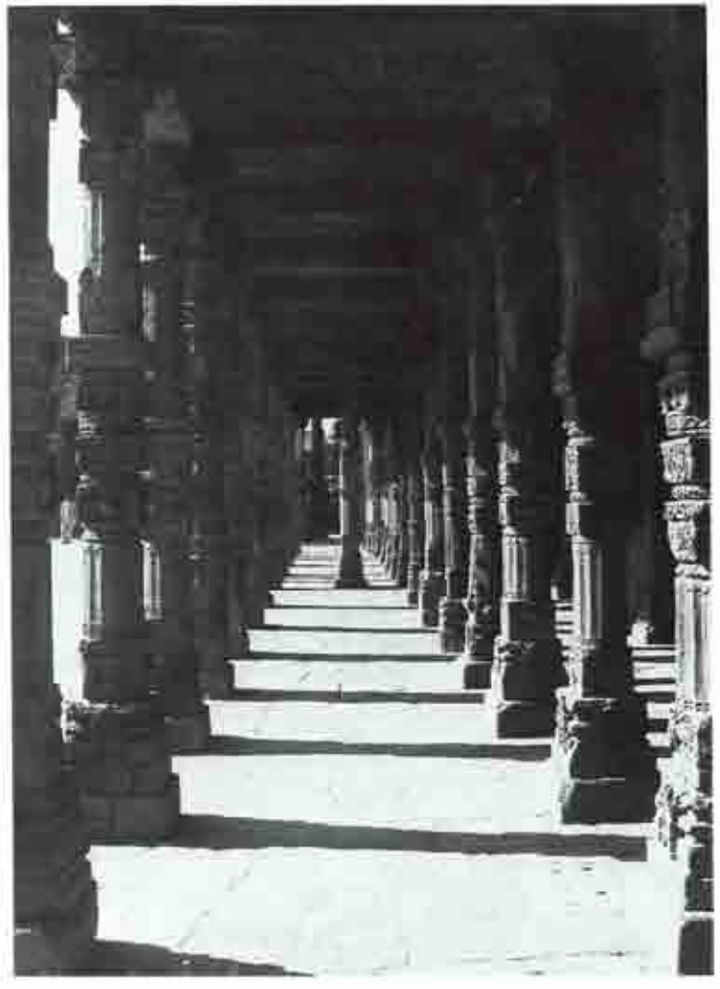
2.19, 2.20 Cloister Galleries of Hindu Temple Interior

One of Delhi's most illustrious sons, Sayyid Ahmad Khan in his *Asar-us-Sanadid* ('Remains of the Past'), written in 1847 when he was thirty, compiled the first catalogue of Delhi's historic buildings. In the extensive section on the Qutb complex, he pointed out the re-use of Hindu temple elements for the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque.

The redoubtable Major Robert Smith had in the 1830s contributed to some 'reconstruction' of the south-east cloisters by using some pillars from the later extended section of the mosque (Carr Stephen, 43). Fergusson, writing in the *First Report* of the Archaeological Survey of India, was to do a detailed analysis of the pillars of the cloisters indicating which were *in situ* and which had been relocated. In the 1880s H.H. Cole and in the early 1900s Gordon Sanderson also did extensive research and conservation work at the Qutb site.

No. 2.19 is a view of the northern cloister and 2.20 of the eastern corridor.









2.21 Cloister Galleries of Hindu Temple Exterior

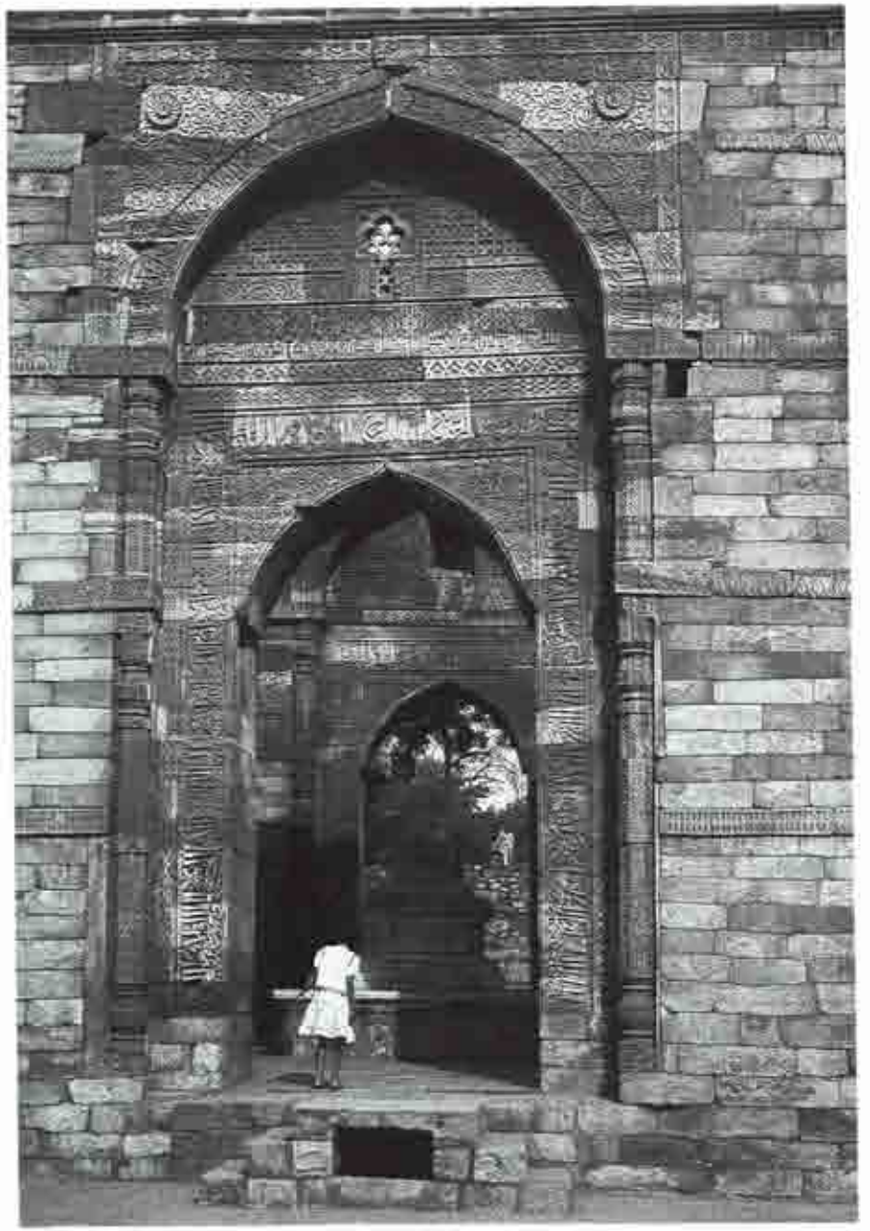
The eastern cloisters have four rows of pillars, while the northern and southern have only three. Details of these are given in Beglar (pp. 36–47), details which are fascinating on account of their indicating the 'archaeological' nature of the work involved in determining levels, modifications and relocations of the elements of the twenty-seven temples said to have been used for the mosque and courtyard.





2.22 *'Rauza' or shrine of Ghori Shah near [the Kutb]*

This is the mausoleum (*rauza*) of Sultan Iltutmish (reigned 1211–36) who enlarged the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque and courtyard, extended the Qutb Minar, built a beautiful memorial for his son (Sultan Ghari) and presumably designed his own mausoleum, located south-west of the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque. Here is perhaps the most beautiful combination of sandstone in softly-varying shades, and exquisite calligraphy, both within and on the exterior. The building presumably once had a dome, which has long since collapsed.





2.23, 2.24 Ruins near the Kuth

2.23 is a view of the scattered pillars west of the great arches of the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque, and 2.24 the outer southern colonnade, both much plainer in design than the highly ornamented inner pillars. The pillars in 2.23 are the only ones left of the actual mosque (cf. Plate III in Beglar); those of 2.24, just south of the Qutb Minar, were built by Iltutmish (Beglar, 49–50).

At first glance the pillars at the Qutb appear very much alike. However, they are not only different in details, but their placement was done at different times, in the reigns (and probably under the supervision) of three rulers — Qutbuddin Aibak, Iltutmish and Alauddin Khilji.





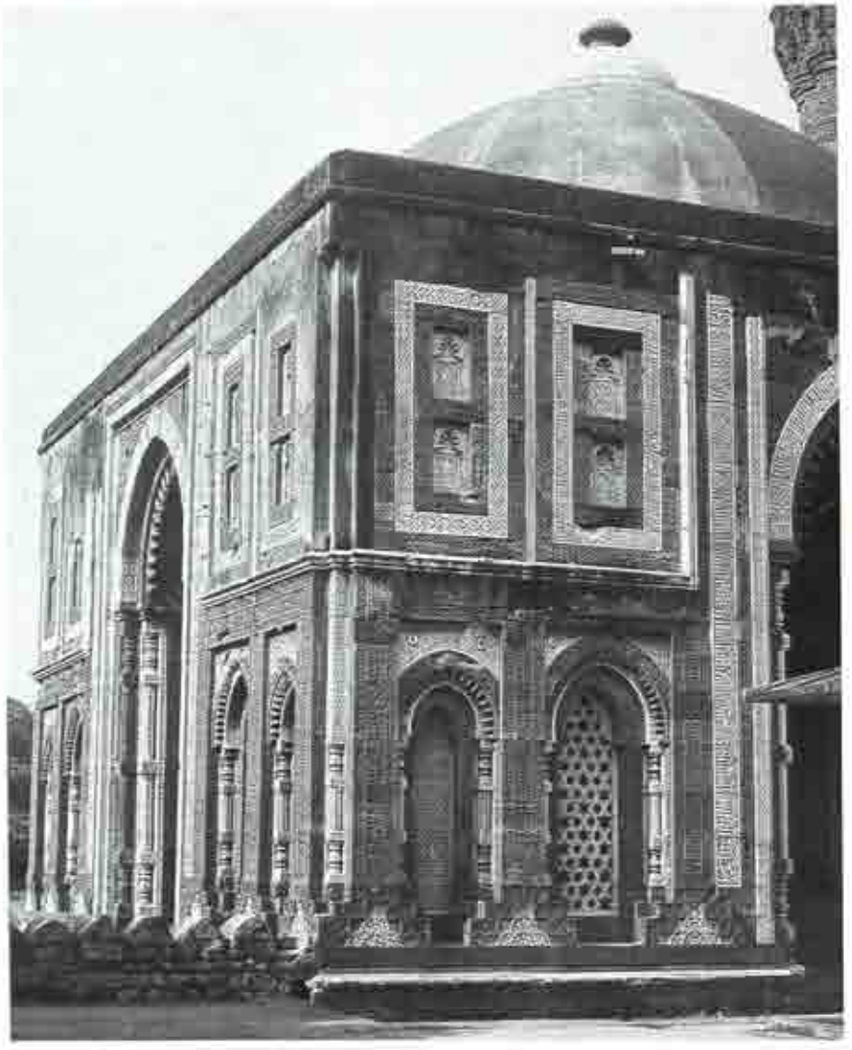




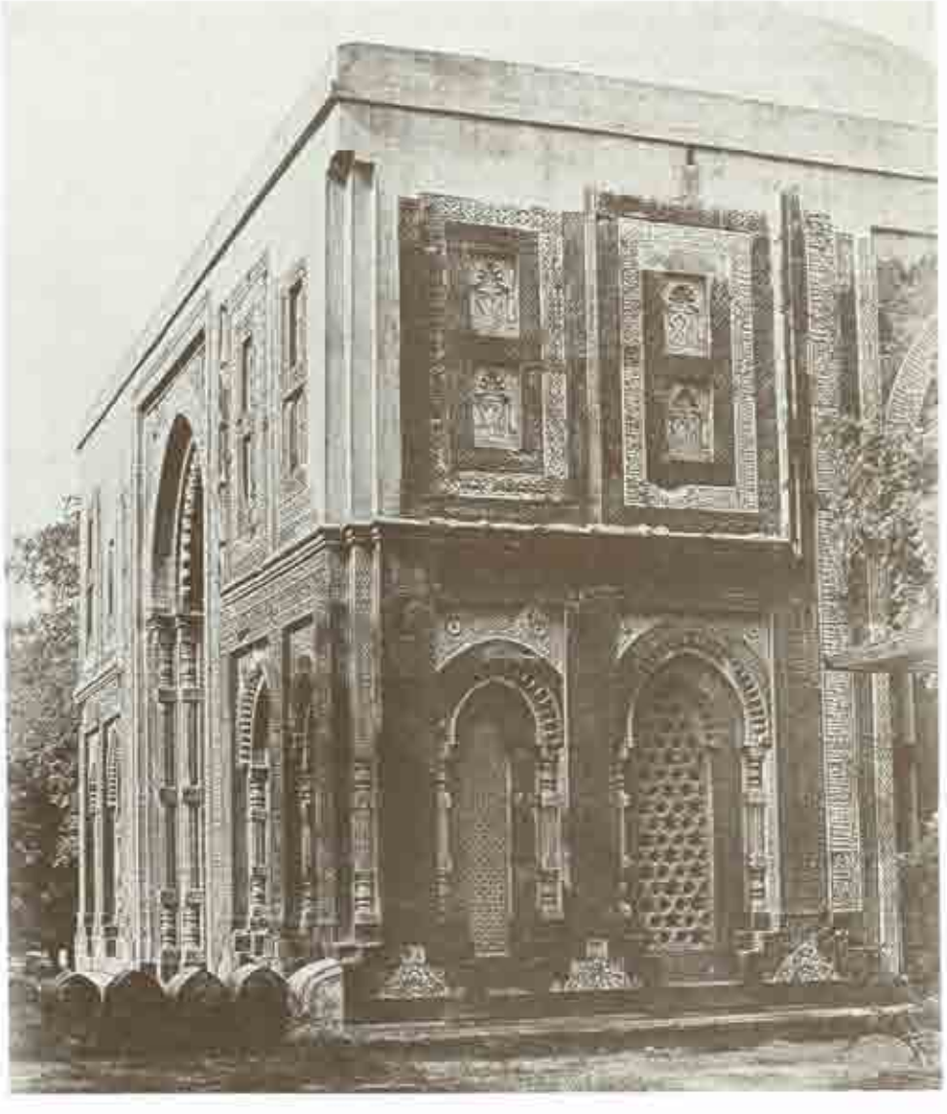
2.25, 2.26 *Shrines*

Beato was photographing the Qutb area before Cunningham and his team had done their documentation. What he calls a 'shrine' (rauza/mausoleum?) could by its form be mistaken for one, but it is in fact the Alai Darwaza, the very beautiful marble and sandstone gateway to the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque, south-east of the Qutb Minar, with an interior richly covered with chiselled designs. This was one of the numerous contributions of Sultan Alauddin Khilji to Delhi's architecture. In 1827 Major Burt found the structure in 'a state of dilapidation and destruction' and feared that 'none of it will stand' (Carr Stephen, 57). When Beato saw it, it was almost as good as new, thanks to it having been repaired in 1829 by . . . who else? — Major Robert Smith.





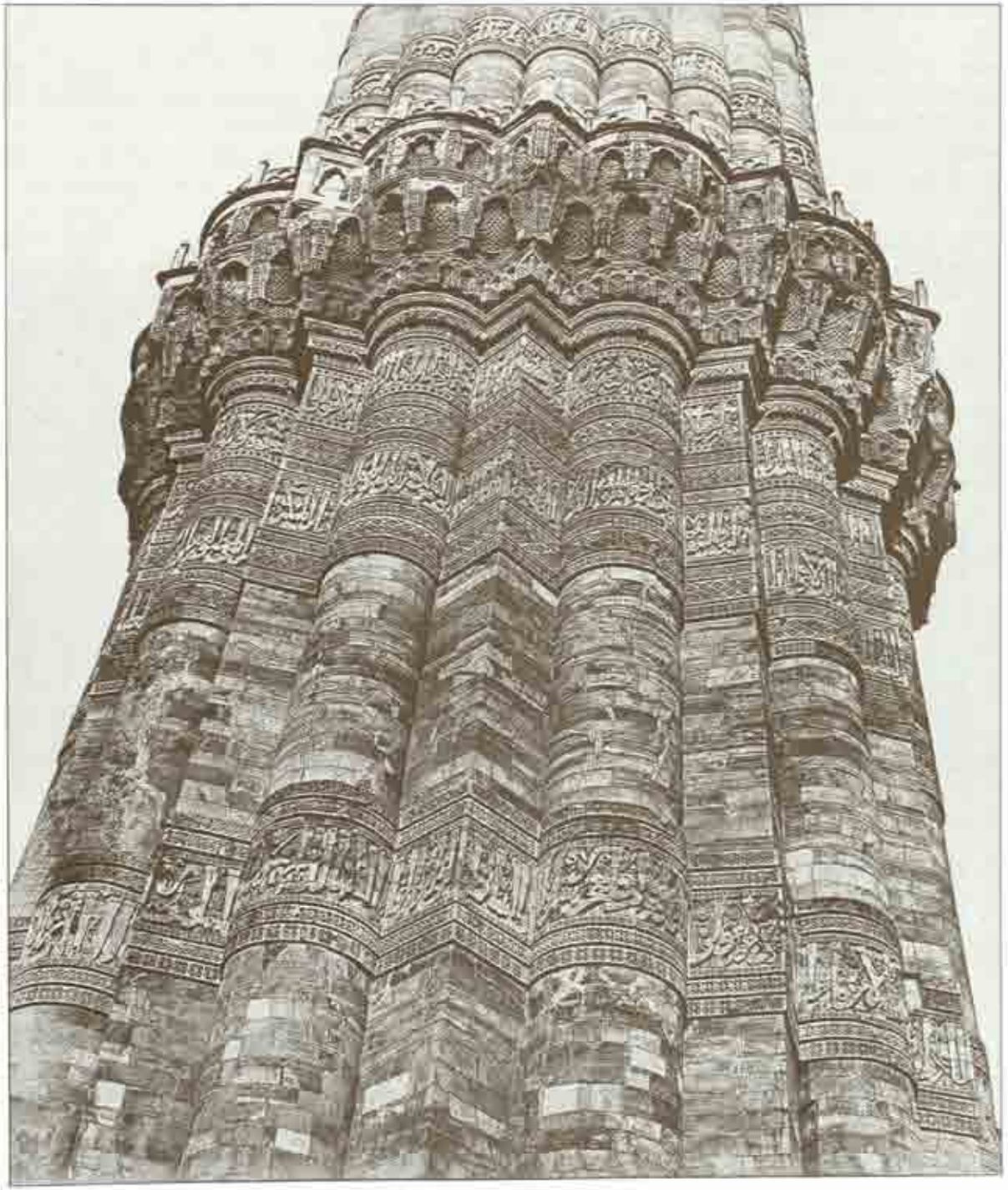




2.27 Lower portion of the Kutb Minar

Painted by Delhi artists of the Company School, measured by engineers and architects, photographed with all manner of lenses and from all angles, the Qutb Minar has also been of interest to calligraphers. As Cunningham said: 'The history of the Qutb Minar is written in its inscriptions'; the Sultans are praised in these, in lines interspersed with verses from the Quran. The honeycomb work under the balconies has a strong resemblance to that in the Alhambra at Granada, which was built at the same time. The balustrade on this floor, as in the others, was chiefly the work of Major Smith. One wishes that Beato had taken one of his panoramic views from the top storey of the Minar. It would have been of immeasurable value to present-day practitioners of conservation. (N.B. After a tragic accident in 1981, entry to the Qutb has been closed.)





2.28 New Burial Ground in Delhi with General Nicholson's Tomb

From the site of the oldest Delhi to its recent history — Beato's collection closes with a view of a British 'shrine' — the tomb of General Nicholson who, wounded on 14 September 1857, the day of the assault on Delhi, died on 25 September.

Many thousands had died, like him, fighting to hold Delhi or to capture it. 'Nicholson's funeral was taking place as we marched out of Delhi at daybreak on the morning of 24 September' recalled Roberts. 'That march through Delhi in the early morning light was a gruesome proceeding. Our way from the Lahore Gate by the Chandni Chowk led through a veritable city of the dead. . . . We marched in silence, or involuntarily spoke in whispers' (Roberts, II, 258).

Beato must have taken his photograph some time after 27 October 1858 — the date of the passing of little Jessy Eleanor Blewitt (aged 3 years 10 months) who is buried under the small tombstone surmounted by a pillbox-like structure seen in Beato's photograph and hidden by the railing in the recent picture. The Nicholson Cemetery outside Kashmiri Gate is not far from the place where he fell (in the lane behind the northern wall, since named Nicholson Road). There are two older British cemeteries — one (1809) south of the General Post Office near Lothian Bridge, and another (1823) opposite Miranda House in Delhi University.

Today the cemetery is somewhat gone to seed, but not vandal-ized, and Nicholson's grave is protected by a high railing. The adjacent Nicholson Gardens was renamed Tilak Park, and a massive statue of Raja Agrasen stands in place of the equestrian statue of Nicholson.

And so ends a story that began with forty Indian soldiers running across the Bridge of Boats to Delhi . . .





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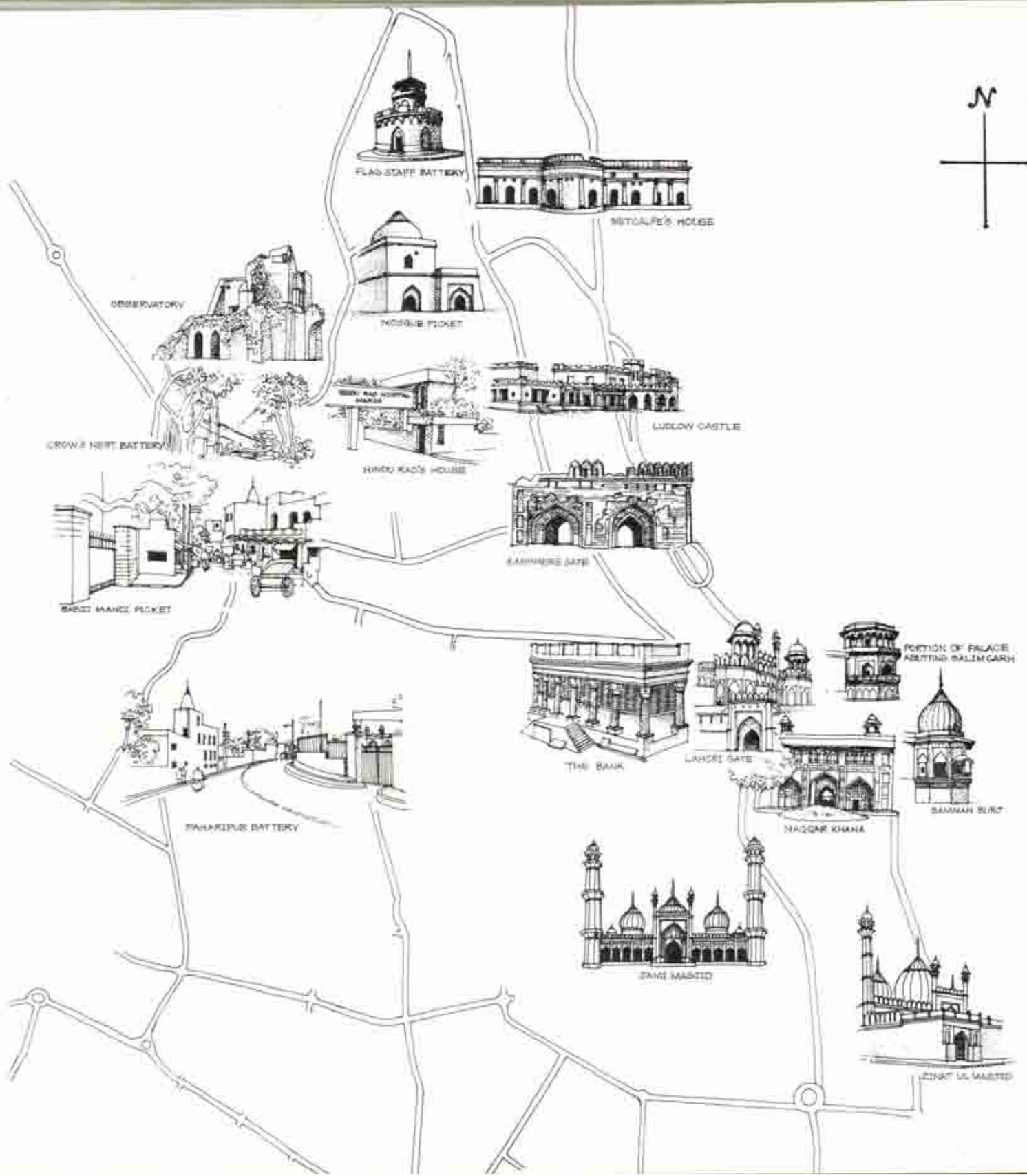
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